



당신과 나의 어사일럼

무한성의 갈라테아

III

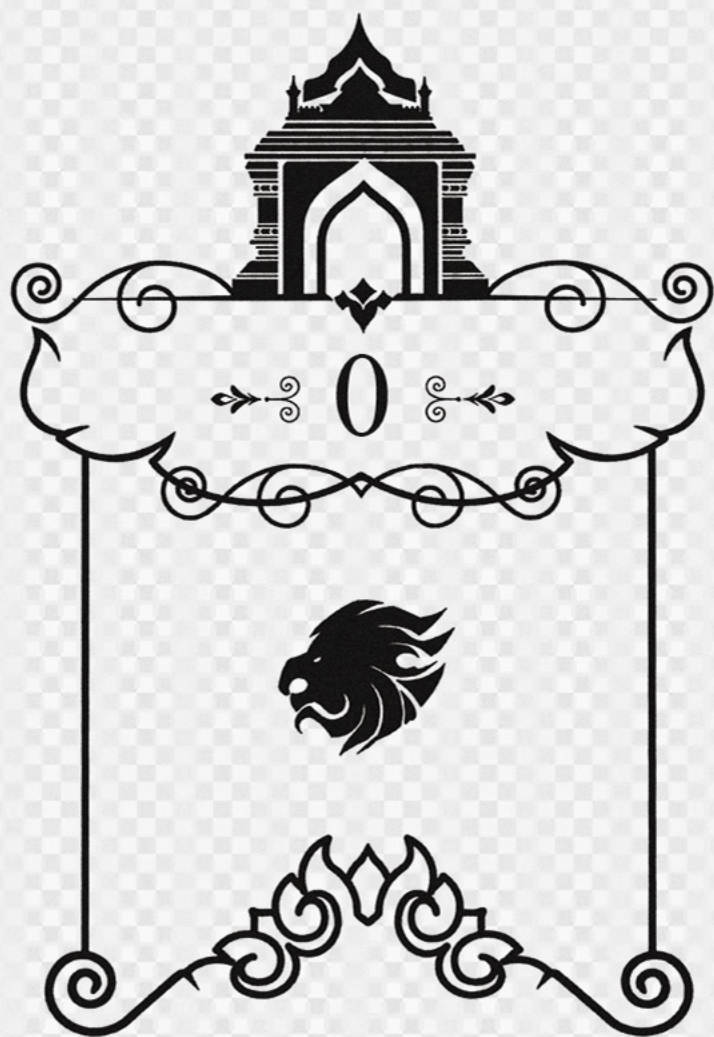
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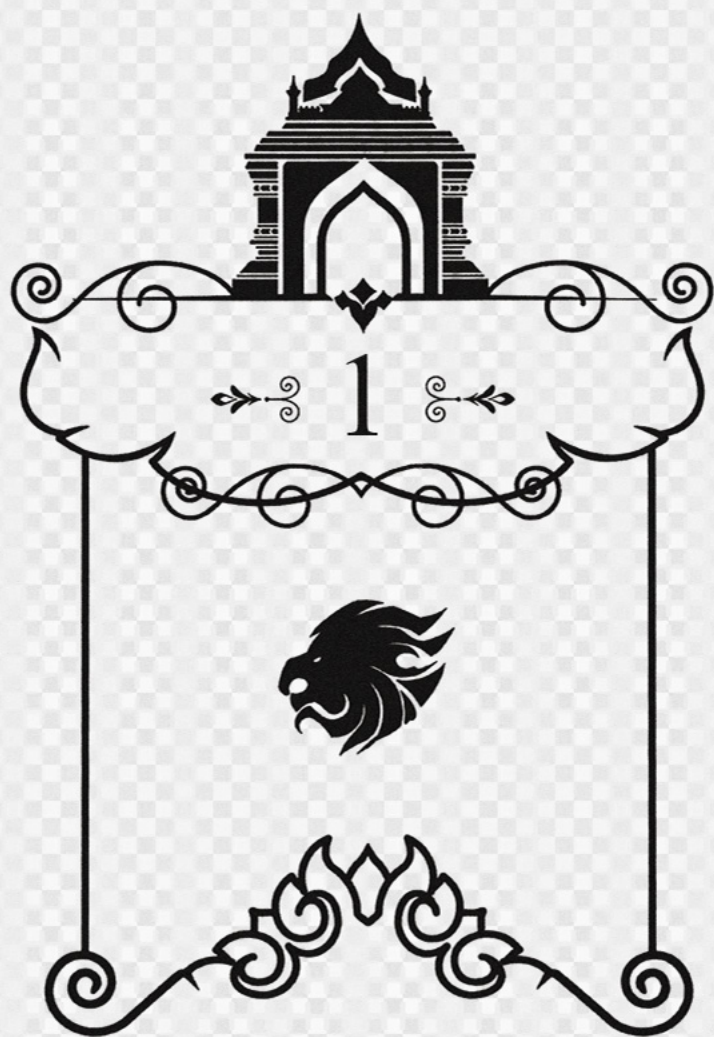


I was happy to have met you.
However, I would have been happier if I didn't.
I now have to live in a world without you.
I have to live in this Hell.

And fear arrived.



There are three facts that you all must know.
One is the fact that I have a soft spot in my heart for you all.
Another is the fact that I sympathize with you all.
The final fact is the truth that I feel apologetic towards
both myself and you all.
I am not a monster.
I am not a beast who does not know how to
empathize with others and understand that feeling.
I hope that you do not doubt this fact.
I pray that you do not doubt at least this sole fact.



I organized the current situation.

First, Sii's arm was cut off by the Silver Lion Earl.

Second, although we succeeded in somehow sticking Sii's arm back on, be it Sii or myself, we were both very upset at the Silver Lion Earl.

Third, that's why--- we've decided to receive an apology from the Silver Lion Earl.

I hugged Sii tightly and comforted her. Although her weeping had ended relatively quickly, her body took a long period of time to cool down.

Sii had her head lowered with a bright red complexion on her face, the redness contained a meaning that was different from the similar color which she was displaying earlier. She spoke.

“Yujin…….”

“Yes?”

“Uhm…… if you could let me go now.”

I released her. After being flustered for a long moment, she grabbed my sides, lifted me up, and set me down on the floor next to the bed. Sii sat on the edge of the bed and stuck her foot out towards me. Once my service reached near the heel of her foot, Sii, who was just barely able to calm her bashfulness down, gave me a sidelong glance.

“But Yujin……. How are you going to make Her Excellency……the Earl apologize?”

“There are two methods that come to mind immediately.”

I massaged Sii's toe.

“First, threaten her with violence. The execution of this in itself is already impossible right off the bat and even if we did manage to

carry it out, it'd be impossible to obtain the desired result. If Miss Sii wishes to hear the reason, then I'll explain."

"V-Violence, something like that..... explain. Why is it impossible?"

"Miss Sii and the Earl certainly are siblings."

"Mm~~! What are you saying all of a sudden!"

I believed that the two of them were truly related.

Furthermore, if you look at the fact that Sii did nothing more than puff out her cheeks, she must certainly be aware of her bloodline as well.

"There are 4 obstacles standing before the execution of that plan. For starters, I dislike violence."

"You're changing the subject..... I actually don't like violence either. Something like making a person listen through violence, that's really, incredibly, the worst way of thinking."

"If we put aside the weaponry which the Silver Lion Earl possesses as an unknown factor, then there are two remaining obstacles. They're both respectively related to the power which the Silver Lion Earl has, the beings which she can summon and the strength that comes along with them. It'd be difficult to make it so that she's unable to use her summoning ability and even if we're able to make her use up all of her summons, I'm also a summoned being, so if she cancels my summon, then I'll just end up returning back to my original world."

"Don't ignore what I say! Mm~~ really..... What about the part about it being impossible to obtain the desired result even if we do carry it out?"

"It's impossible to correct someone through violence."

Sii looked at me blankly.

“Yujin, occasionally says some incredibly sane things sometimes.”

I looked at Sii blankly as well.

The pouting Sii started patting my head with her right hand. I stopped Sii's hand by grabbing her wrist and changed it so that she was patting my head with her left hand. Sii had a puzzled expression on her face before she became red and shifted her patting to stroking my head.

“If it's impossible, then why did you mention it?”

“Ideas aren't things that fall from the sky, but they are things that must be dug out from the ground. If you wish to excavate something useful, then you have to dig with a shovel. I'd normally do this in my head by myself, but I have someone to do this together with right now.”

“I-Is someone like me helpful?”

Sii uttered while opening her eyes wider than usual and stealing glances at me. Although it's a situation where the answer was already there and all she had to do was say it, instead of pointing that out, I lifted the end of her hand and placed it against my lips. Starting from the end of her hand, Sii became bright red and her lips twitched.

“Mm~~..... Yujin, occasionally does some incredibly cute things sometimes.”

Those words flowed as well.

“There's no need for you to try and see 'more' than what I do. Try to look at things that are 'different' from what I see. In other words, there is no need for you to 'match' what I say and attempt to 'put strength' into my opinion. You should either go 'against' me or 'raise an objection' to what I say. That's what friends are supposed to do.”

“..... Friend.”

“Yes. As much as that is the case, just as I had said earlier, if you have an opinion or an idea, then say them without reserve. Don’t be seized by the sense that your thoughts are ‘nonsense’, and like right now, start off by laying out all of your thoughts and explain why they’re nonsense. If you repeat this process, then there will be occasions where you’re able to discover veins of gold.”

“Veins of gold..... Okay, I understand! Coincidentally, since I’m the adopted daughter of a blacksmith! I’ll make sure to always hit gold!”

Sii clenched her first and firmed her resolve. I pressed my lips against the end of that hand and sat beside her.

“I’ll continue. The second method of making the Silver Lion Earl apologize. Make an exchange.”

“..... Exchange?”

“I was just barely able to consolidate my enthusiasm, but I feel like a keyword completely unrelated to apologizing came out.....’ Did you think this just now?”

“Eh! I didn’t..... mm, no~~ Yup, I honestly, was..... Yup.....I honestly thought that.”

“Let’s confirm our respective objectives. I do not want to break the Silver Lion Earl.”

I grabbed Sii’s hand and explained.

“I believe that a punishment is required. I also believe that she must be corrected. Regardless of whatever past she has experienced, I believe that she’s crossed the boundary of what’s forgivable or not. However, my ultimate goal is to make the Silver Lion Earl regret her decisions. My goal isn’t to kill, break, or destroy her.”

“Okay..... I see. Mm..... Yujin is kind, after all, that’s right.”

“It’s not kindness. It’s selfishness, experience, and childishness.”

“.....Please explain.”

“It’s selfishness since if we were to kill or break the Silver Lion Earl, then I would be unable to return to my world. It’s experience because I’ve destroyed someone before and I know the sense of futility that comes from it. It’s childishness since I haven’t personally experienced something that severe yet.”

“The first two make sense, but Yujin, if being kidnapped and being forced to live an irrational life isn’t within the category of being severe to you, then what does ‘something severe’ mean to Yujin?”

“Are you curious?”

“Yes. Yujin was the one who told me to stop moderately agreeing to things.”

I nodded.

“Doing something like that to someone who is more precious than me.”

I answered.

“That’s what a ‘severe action’ towards me is.”

Half-opened eyes. Sii’s pupils, which felt as if they were stuck on a horizon, rose up and ended up in a state where they were stuck on a different horizon, but upside down.

“Yujin, are you not precious?”

“I am. However, there are things that are more precious than me.”

“Okay.”

Sii nodded her head.

“I see.”

Sii uttered.

A short silence.

“And what about Miss Sii?”

“I, want.”

Sii responded. I, want.

She then continued.

“I, want to break her.”

While biting her lower lip, tightly, Sii spoke while gripping onto my hand like a predatory bird latching onto its prey.

“I won’t kill. Yujin told me that there’s nothing past that after all. But, at the very least, I want to return the hardship that I had to go through. Give back the pain that I had to experience down to the last dot, mm, I want to return that pain to her a hundred fold. I want to make it so that she becomes so afraid of me that she’s unable to look me in the eyes, make her lick my feet while in front of others. I want to give her humiliation and pain. I’m.”

I’m, Sii continued.

“I’m a shallow and cruel person. I’m ungrateful, and I really have no sense of honor……, Like Yujin had said earlier, in moments like this, I feel like that person’s sibling. Yup, I feel like that, but.”

After taking a deep breath, Sii Garno Mikatni pressed her hand against her forehead.

“Every time I feel like this, a thought comes to my head as well. Why am I the only one who’s going through this? Bad things become better if everyone shares it---. I can’t throw away this way of thinking…… Really, I think, that I’m a lowly human.”

Her words started off spitefully and ended as self-deprecations. Sii, who was taking a moment to catch her breath, fixed her complexion, which was giving off a white glow, and finally gazed down at the hand which she was holding onto. After seeing my hand that had become completely pale because of her grip, Sii became tearful.

“Sorry, it hurts, right?”

“It’s all right.”

“Sorry…… at that time too, it must have hurt.”

“I said it back then as well, but it’s all right. If it did hurt, then all Miss Sii has to do is repent and not do it anymore. It’s fine to repent later if you’re unable to do so now.”

I told her while adjusting the position of my glasses. Sii, while massaging my hand,

“……Whenever I listen to what Yujin says, I feel like the world is quite simple. Even a twisted human like me is able to feel like this. One day, I want to be like Yujin, is what I believe.”

“Although I don’t recommend it.”

Sii smiled bitterly. She didn’t pry any further.

I spoke.

“Since the difference between our goals is something that’ll take time to change, let’s adjust them gradually over time. The smaller goal---since receiving an apology is the common ground between our goals, let’s discuss mainly about that.”

“Okay. An exchange, right? What kind of exchange are you talking about?”

“Place the Silver Lion Earl’s apology on one side of the balance and we’ll contemplate on what we’ll place on the opposite side. If it’s a

shell of an apology, then that's something that can be obtained by moderately establishing a distinguished service, however, if we wish to receive an apology that's not just a shell but an apology that contains pain within it as well, then the thing we have to place on our side of the balance must be heavier."

"Balance..... Ah, a scale. Mm~ an apology that contains pain..... is it not supposed to be an apology that contains sincerity?"

"You cannot purchase an apology that contains sincerity with an exchange."

Silence.

"Like I said, Yujin occasionally says some incredibly sane things sometimes."

"What do you think would be appropriate to place on the balance?"

"Mm~~ you ignored me again..... I don't want a shell of an apology. If I were to hear something like that, then that would just make me boil on the inside more. That's why, at the very least, if it can be purchased in a trade, then I want to buy a pain-filled apology. In regard to what to put on the other side of the scale..... Hm..... not a distinguished service, but wouldn't we need a threat?"

If, instead of a practical reward for a distinguished service, you could reward the individual by saying just a single thing to them, then anyone would pick that option. In the end, pain originates from 'doing something even though you don't want to' after all. The very act of understanding this held a great resemblance to the Silver Lion Earl.

I acknowledged that resemblance.

"That's correct. Although it's possible through a distinguished service, if we neglect it, then we'll need to carry out a service that's on par with rescuing the Earl when she herself is in danger, so the keypoint is a threat."

“Rather than that, I don’t want to establish a distinguished service! Just what am I feeling lacking about that I have no other choice but to perform a feat? To that girl…… Mm, really…….”

Sii closed her mouth. That expression of hers, which was more dyed in self-hatred than it was rage, probably came from the fact that she was aware that she was behaving like a child.

I stroked her head.

“Miss Sii.”

“Hm?”

“A line where you will not yield is important, however, if you become buried underneath that line, then you will lose your goal. For that part, I believe that a professional-like mind is necessary.”

I paused for a moment before continuing.

“The Silver Lion Earl is the lord of this City of Confinement. She possesses a faction that’s loyal to her. Her mentality may be unstable, but because of that, she possesses a dangerous charm that radiates from her demeanor. You want to show that individual Hell, right? If that’s the case, then ultimately, you need to have a charisma that’s great enough to go against her.”

“Charisma…….”

Sii made a face that appeared as if she were embracing my words into her chest.

“……, ……., Okay. I’ll, work hard. You’ll help, right?”

“Of course.”

Sii nodded. I stroked her head a bit more before removing my hand and speaking.

“In that regard, if we’re to perform a distinguished service, then we

need an achievement that's impressive enough to receive the admiration of someone who's either the same rank as the Silver Lion Earl or higher. If we're going to threaten her, then we need to have a hold on her weakness. In order to do so, for starters, we have to gather information, but mm..... it'd be good if we had a little more people on our side.....”

We needed at least two other people to handle the things which both Sii and I will most likely be unable to manage on our own. Although there were some strong candidates, something that I could provide for them from my end..... there were things that I brought from Earth, but it'd most likely be impossible to obtain a proper sympathizer with this kind of physical reward. If it's like that, then a slightly different method.....

“Hey, Yujin.”

I paused.

Sii spoke towards me.

“I, since I'll be thinking a lot like Yujin told me to. Since I'll be doing my best. Lessen your thoughts a bit, Yujin.You shouldn't rush.”

She was right.

Nothing good would come from being hasty.

“Yes, let's proceed slowly.”

Once I stroked her head again, Sii looked at me with narrowed eyes.

“For someone who uses formal speech, you stroke my head however you please. I believe that Yujin, is an irreverent child.”

“Is it unpleasant?”

“I never said that!” Sii lowered her head and pressed her forehead against my shoulder. “……more. A bit more. Do it all the way to the back of my neck.”

I did so.



Even if you become impatient, it can't be helped.

Life isn't a quiz show. Something like a host who overuses 2-3 times chance opportunities just because their show has entered the mid-portion of the program, those people don't exist. It's not like chances themselves are non-existent, it's just that, to an extent, those are all just bonuses. The only trick to obtaining a high score is to pile it up earnestly.

This is the same even if your start is somewhat late. If you're at the bottom, then you have to gradually gather points while you're back there. For starters, while within a pace where you can maintain both your balance and breathing, run. Walk at the very least. Don't stop if possible, and absolutely never fall down.

As long as you don't fall down, the opportunity to run will arrive.



I raised a needle and thread in one hand. After threading the piece of string through the needle while using a tool from the sewing kit, which I had brought back from Earth, I held it up. I adjusted my voice as I began to sew.

“The first pillar rose in the north. The first shadow to cast down on the earth floated up and became clouds. Mixed together with the first raindrops to seep into the earth, the second pillar struck down to the right. The dust that scattered piled up and became mountain ranges…….”

As this was a hymn that described the creation of this world and was the national anthem that praised the founding process of this country, it was a practical song that helped people become accustomed to the words and numbers of this language. Once I got to the part where the ninth pillar struck down due west and shook the entire world, I stopped singing.

“Done.” After making a knot, I spoke. **“You can turn on the lights now.”**

“Eck!? I’m not…….”

Although I could hear a panicked voice, someone soon turned on the lights. Within the now brightened room, I was sitting face to face with a maid, a single table placed between us, and with other maids standing around us. The maid in front of me, who had been sewing while leaning forward a bit, barked.

“W-What is this!? It hasn’t even been 10 minutes! How sloppily did you do it for you to have finished so quickly!?”

This girl’s name was Kina. Because of her short height, which didn’t even reach a single meter high, her small physique, and the fluffy dog ears hanging off both sides of her head, you could tell that she wasn’t a human but a type of beast race.

It was a misleading expression. It’s questionable whether otherworlders, like the Earl and Zia, were even the same race as the people from Earth or not. In any case, among the classifications of this world, her race seemed to be referred to as *Extro’ tiel*(The race of cutting teeth…… I’ll be liberally translating it to Saber-Fangs), and if I were to distinguish her by her personality, then she was one of the idiot trio types.

Although she seemed to have nimble fingers that were at least more impressive than the other maids, she wasn’t a match for me.

“……Kina. The sewing that this guy……this person did, is perfect.”

The maid known as Shiyo(she’s a normal human) hesitantly made a fair evaluation. Kina pricked up her ears as if she couldn’t believe Shiyo’s words, but once she saw the fabric that I had sewn, Kina became speechless. She then hesitantly hid her needlework behind her back.

“Wan! This doesn’t count! Because you started singing all of a sudden! That’s why I couldn’t concentrate!”

How cute.

“W-W-W-What are you staring at!? Woof! Why did you suddenly start singing!?”

“In order to rhythmically maintain the distance between the stitches.”

“.....I-Is it possible to maintain the distance by doing that?”

Is this fellow’s dexterity actually impressive? Even the buttons attached to the maid uniform she’s wearing were sewn on crookedly. Instead of pointing that out, I reached out and took Kina’s needlework. I tailored it while humming. I finished sewing around the time Kina’s ears had become pricked up and were as straight as rails.

“If there’s more to be done, then hand it to me.”

“.....Woof......”

“Is there no more?”

“T-That’s everything..... for, today. Woof......”

Kina uttered and averted her gaze. I nodded and gestured towards her.

“Then take those clothes off.”

“Bark.....!? W-What......”

“The buttons are crooked. I’ll fasten it properly.”

“Y-Y-You don’t have to worry about that!”

Well, it can't be helped then. I didn't pester her any further with my offer and proceeded to neatly fold the pieces of fabrics. A scarlet cat, twelve fingers, a violet swamp, etc, they were burgees with all sorts of crests embroidered onto them.

“Nyaah! But don't think that this is the end! There are more things to do tomorrow! If you want to properly welcome guests, then you need to do a lot more!”

I nodded and departed from the room.



I placed a broom and dustpan on one side. I stood in front of a bookshelf and looked around the entire room. I set the rags out in a line and flipped a sponge insect upside down beside the rags. After glancing down at the metallic limbs wriggling underneath the sponge-like body, I dusted my hands.

After finishing my preparations like that, I immediately started to clean. I moved every carriable object outside of the room. Following after that, I promptly lowered my back and began sweeping. I gathered all of the trash into one area, and after transferring the dust and trash from the dustpan to the trash can, I threw away the garbage. The wiping, which started immediately after that, ended the instant both sides of every single rag had all been used. I gathered all of the used tools into one spot and carried back everything that I had taken outside.

“It's over.”

One of the lady type maids, a girl named Seri, gathered her hands in front of her chest.

“30 minutes…….”

She looked as if she were incredibly impressed. Several of the other

maids, as if they were displeased by this, barked their complaints.

“Woof! Senior Seri! What’s with that expression! That’s unlike you who was once called the Empress of Cleaning!”

“That’s right! Don’t let that pervert……that mister, who fancies himself as that Whitey’s toy put on airs!”

“Kina, Shiyo, be quiet.”

“Yes, ma’am…….”

Kina and Shiyo, who had raised their tone a second ago, lowered their heads with sullen looks on their faces. Seri, thinking they were hopeless, scratched her cheek before walking towards me.

“Thank you for your assistance. Although I believe that we’re making you work too hard for something like cleaning.”

“Starting from cleaning, if you develop a habit for these sorts of things, then you can also efficiently respond to other things that aren’t ‘something like this’.”

“Are you sure that life doesn’t become more complicated because of that?”

I didn’t answer.

Seri placed the back of her hand near the edge of her mouth and giggled.

“It’s indeed something that’s worth modeling oneself after. As much as we have big guests scheduled to visit one after the other, it’d be a good idea to be on the side of doing the cleaning thoroughly. Did you say your name was Sir Yujin?”

“It’s fine to not attach the sir.”

“All right, Sir Yujin.” Seri, who had approached slowly, brushed

my shoulder as if she were stroking it. **“Then we’ll be in your care until Sii has recovered.”**

“Likewise.”

I picked up the laundry which had to be hung out to dry in my hands.

They had just arrived from the second-floor basement of the central tower. The opportunity to reveal what facility is located there will probably arrive one day. I’ll just say that it’s a place where you can use as much hot water as you want. Before the heated laundry, which had yet to lose its warmth, could cool down, I used them to thaw my hands.

“.....I see, you’re a pervert.”

A maid named Alshi muttered. She was one of the martial artist type maids that I saw when I first came up from the basement. She had long, straight, black hair and a small frame. She already looked as if she had a layer of skin that was one size too small for her, but her firm body type made her slightly large chest stick out further.

I decided to acknowledge the fact that having my hands shoved into a pile of socks and stockings could appear weird.

“Sorry.”

“The weather is cold so I, do understand. It’s something I, do often as well after all. But at the very least, do it with the larger articles of clothing.”

“Okay.”

The socks with the socks, the stockings with the stockings, the panties with the panties, and the tops and bottoms with the tops and bottoms, I separated each article of clothing by their types and stacked them up in their own respective piles. There were also bed sheets and blankets. This laundry had come from the living quarters

of the maids. Although it appeared as if there were no marks on any of these to distinguish who the owner was, there were probably various distinct characteristics about each article of clothing that only their owners could recognize. Except, only Sii's shabby stockings stuck out like a sore thumb. I should buy her a bunch of new ones when I go back to Korea.

I started to hang the laundry up. The drying area on the rooftop of the Star Tower was the optimal place for sunlight. I hung up the bed sheets and blankets first, the tops and bottoms of clothes followed after that, then the stockings, and for last, I hung up the undergarments and the socks. During that process, I checked on the generator which I had brought back from Korea. Due to the fact that I had installed these kinds of generators a countless number of times back during the 8 Years' War, this generator was functioning properly as well. However, because of this very generator and also because of the laundry that had been set out to dry, there was a single thing that I was worried about.

“What happens if it rains?”

The clothes will most likely be fine, but I was more worried about the bed sheets and blankets. However, Alshi gestured towards a drainage pipe without any concern.

“It's set up so that the rain scatters and, goes in there. With the power of, magic.”

So it's a fantasy setting in this part.

No, everything has been a fantasy setting since the very beginning.....

If there's no need to be worried about the rain, then the next thing that should be held in concern was the chance of theft, however, that doesn't feel like something I should be particularly worried about here. Knowledge about the Silver Lion Earl's resoluteness when it comes to responding to acts of thievery should have already spread widely throughout the castle by now and they should also have their

own safety measures. Above all, this was the rooftop of the Star Tower.

After hanging up all of the laundry, I started to gather together the previously hung up laundry, which I had spread out beforehand, and placed them into a pile. I then began to fold them. Alshi, who was displaying an upset expression the entire time, had a quizzical look the moment she saw me folding the clothes.

Alshi attempted to copy my movements multiple times before making a face that looked as if she had fallen into a sea of mystery.

“How do you, do that?”

I showed it to her.

Alshi attempted it once more and made a face that appeared as if she had been scammed.

“.....Really, how do you, do it?”

I gave her a demonstration. Placing the shirt of a maid uniform down on a flat surface, I traced a horizontal line across the center of the shirt and drew another vertical line down from the right shoulder, making a sort of cross. After that, I pinched the intersection point of the two lines with one hand, grabbed the right shoulder with my other hand, and I then folded the shirt down towards the bottom point of the vertical line and flipped it. [\[1\]](#)

Alshi, who had been watching my demonstration carefully, attempted it once more. It wasn't long before an expression of realization spread across her face.

“.....So it's, magic.”

That's not right.

It'd be great if these people didn't depend on a fantastical setting so easily just because they're in a fantasy world.

“Place it down in front of you.”

Alshi placed the shirt down before her. I moved and stood behind her.

“May I grab your hands?”

“I have, a lover.”

“I pray for your happiness together. May I grab your hands?”

Alshi conceded. I grabbed her hands and moved them like I did my own while folding the shirt a second ago. Alshi’s expression finally changed into that of understanding once I made her fold five shirts like that.

“Ooooooh…… Thank you, very much!”

Alshi spoke while trembling in awe. I patted her head since her reaction was cute.

It seems there were maids who didn’t like that.

“Woof! Alshi! What are you doing!? Isn’t it fatal if a man touches you!?”

“Where’s Ariya in a time like this!? I’m going to tell her everything!”

These two, what jobs were they exactly in charge of for them to be able to follow behind me like this all the time?

“Because of an errand for Miss Sophna, Ariya went to the arena. Rather than that, Shiyo, Kina, aren’t you two not, supposed to be here? You don’t, have other jobs?”

I remembered the named Sophna. Around the time when I had just arrived in this world and had to write the Silver Lion Earl’s speech, Sophna was a person with the title of ‘Head Vassal’. Yudia mentioned

her name as well. Although I've never actually seen her before.

“I-I just came here to meet a family member!”

“That’s riiight! Kina’s relative is a guard, remember?”

And this was the reason why I said that ‘it should be fine to lower my concern a bit since this was the rooftop of the Star Tower’. The Star Tower was the headquarters for the guards.

Alshi’s expression contorted. The name ‘Ariya’ that kept being mentioned, moreover, if you make the assumption that that ‘Ariya’ was Alshi’s lover, then a conversation about the guards wouldn’t be pleasant to her. Although it seems Kina had realized this as well, contrary to apologizing, she pricked up her ears instead.

**“Hmph! If anything, aren’t you the one who shouldn’t be here? For someone like you who has a thief as her lover!”
Woof!”**

“Ah, wait, Kina. That’s a bit too much…….”

**“What is!? Woof! It’s the truth, isn’t it!? Alshi, if you also---
upah!”**

Kina, who had received a fastball to the face with a ball of laundry, flailed her arms around. Alshi glared at Kina with cold eyes and picked up another piece of laundry in order to make another ball.

“Grrrrrr…… you dare-go-against-meeeee-!”

Kina’s height increased by 3 times and her frame increased to a size that befitted that height. Her maid uniform swelled up as well, shifting in order to match her new physique. However, only the buttons on her uniform were unable to win against the pressure and ended up becoming misaligned. It took less than 2 seconds for this entire process to finish.

I felt like I understood why her race was called ‘Saber-Fangs’ and

not just 'beast race'. Her eye-catchingly large dog ears from when she was still short, didn't change even after her body size had increased. On the other hand, her mouth stretched all the way to her ears and the teeth within her mouth literally became as sharp as daggers.

Even with Kina, who had transformed like the Kuchisake-onna, standing before her, Alshi didn't shrink back whatsoever. If anything, at the same time of her throwing the laundry she had in her hand like a pickoff ball, Alshi tried to leap forward in order to close the distance between her and Kina.

Although I'm not certain, I would have probably been able to witness an amazing fantasy fight scene if I just stood here and watched. However, instead of doing that, I intercepted the pickoff ball that Alshi had tossed and stood between the two maids.

“Stop it.”

Alshi halted. Kina got upset.

“Woof! Why are you getting in the way!?!“

“Don't fight. As you mentioned earlier, we're right above the main building of the guards. Aren't you ashamed to meet that family member of yours who's a part of the guards?”

“Uu…….”

Kina's blade-like teeth interlocked. Shiyo, who was waving her arms around, quickly pulled on Kina's sleeves, thinking that she would miss this opportunity if she didn't intervene as well.

“That's riiight. Stop it, Kinaa. Alshi, you too. Kina didn't say all that on purpose, it was just a slip of her tongue.”

“……Uuuu.”

Kina's body shrunk down to her original size. She stood on her tip toes, raised her ears, and pointed her finger at me.

“Woof! You’re really annoying! I’ll definitely unmask you one day!”

“I don’t wear things like masks.”

“Shut up! Let’s go, Shiyo!”

“All right, let’s be on our way.”

Kina and Shiyo then turned around and walked off. The things we had to do on the rooftop of the Star Tower, which was now absent of obstructors, were clear.

“Now then, let’s fold the rest of the laundry.”

I uttered as I picked up the laundry that Alshi had tossed and hung it up. Alshi let out a sigh and gazed at me.

“You’re a fool, I see.”

“What?”

“For you to have stood in front of a Saber-Fang while they’re in their Troxi(Translating…… ‘Take out?’ ‘Unsheathed?’ I’ll translate it as ‘Unsheathed state’). It’s something that can’t be done, if you’re sane. You could have been injured, you know?”

“The very person who had taunted the other individual and made them enter that unsheathed state is saying something like that to me, that’s a surprise.”

“I can, take care of myself. However, you’re weak.”

“I’m definitely unable to fight. I hate it after all.” I spoke. “That’s why, if possible, I want to stop the fights that I can stop.”

Alshi stared at me. Shortly after, she shrugged.

“.....You really are, an idiot.”

“I’m not particularly dimwitted.”

“No, you’re an, idiot.” After declaring that as if she were nailing her statement down, Alshi crouched down once more and started to fold the clothes. **“Idiot.”**

I didn’t make any more rebuttals and went to help her out instead.

It wasn’t long before our task was complete. Alshi dusted her hands and gazed up at me.

“So, idiot. Did you, eat yet?”

“I was planning to now.”

I answered.



With my hand, I grabbed the handle of a frying pan that had finished heating up.

I placed the minced pieces of meat onto the surface of the pan, making sure that the skin part of the meat was the side that was touching the surface. I slowly maneuvered the frying pan in order to prevent the meat from scorching and sticking to the pan before I largely shook the frying pan once and flipped the pieces of meat over. The side of the meat that was cooked into a golden color became exposed while the pink undercooked side went underneath.

When the grease from the heated meat started to let out an audible grilling sound while also letting off a white steam, I added the vegetables. Once the water from the vegetables and the juices from the meat mixed together and evaporated, a pleasant aroma started to emanate from the frying pan. A wave of heat brushed passed my face

every time I shook the pan. Around the time when I felt a vague taste on the end of my tongue, I stopped the heat, let out a breath, and pushed the contents of the pan onto a plate.

“Stir-fried bunny beef with garlic and cabbage is complete.”

Forks immediately carpet bombed the plate. Each fork, with a piece of meat impaled onto them, went into the mouths of their respective owners.

“.....It’s tastier than what Raya makes.”

The first person to evaluate the food while placing her hand against her mouth was Aresa. Among the co-existing lilies type, she was the maid who was more on the passive side. As expected, Raya, who was the other co-existing lilies type but with a more dominant personality, appeared as if her feelings were hurt.

“Aresa.....! Are you saying that seriously?”

“.....Ah, sorry..... But it’s the truth. Have a bite.”

Aresa picked up another piece of meat with her fork and fed it to Raya. Although Raya raised her eyes, she soon placed her hand against her mouth like Aresa did.

“It’s tastier than what I make.”

“Overall,” I spoke while cleaning the frying pan with a sponge insect. “Raya, you don’t mince the meat enough. The meat won’t cook well. In order to cover that, you make the fire stronger. The taste becomes clouded. In order to cover that, you add more condiments. The taste becomes sharp. In order to round that out, you stir it for a long time. You mess up the timing of the stirring.”

The sponge insect squirmed, making its many metallic legs collide against one another. Raya thought about what I told her for a

moment before tilting her head.

“Then do I just have to cut the meat a lot?”

“That’s the first reason. To be more precise, you need to touch up the meat more. After that, keep the flame weak.”

“Touch it up more, keep the flames weak…… don’t put in water, use an adequate amount of condiments. The timing of the stirring, mm…….”

“Getting accustomed to managing the condiments and the timing of the stirring is something that’ll happen as you continue to cook. For starters, handling the ingredients and controlling the intensity of the fire, as long as you’re able to maintain these two things, you won’t fail in making stir-fried food.”

“Mm…….”

Raya fell into deep thought. It seems there were maids who were displeased by this since they got upset.

“Woof! Why are you just taking it in! Grrr! Raya, you, chewchew, don’t you have any pride, nomnom, as the one in charge of the cooking!?”

“That’s right, that’s right! Even when Miss Abria came to visit, omom, didn’t you say that they put away everything you made, and the stuff that guy……gulp. That mister made went out instead!? Doesn’t that ruin, nyamnyam, your priiide!?”

“……Uhm, Kina, Shiyo. If you’re going to say that, then you can at least do so after having swallowed your food…… although I feel sorry to be the one to say this…….”

“But it’s tasty!”

“Raya! You definitely have to make your food like this next time!”

“Can you not shout at Aresa?”

“Uuu…….”

The maids, who had raised their voices, folded their arms and puffed out their cheeks. Raya let out a sigh and turned to me.

“I should thank you for your advice. I understand well that you aren’t someone who only knows how to flap his lips. Of course, in the first place, I should have blamed my lacking dignity…….”

Raya’s gaze dropped to the side as she spoke. As the person who had talked down on her food when Abria Mikatni was visiting, I could only shrug my shoulders in response.

“The fact that you’re able to reflect on your actions means that you can become better. You’re also young. Don’t worry about it too much.”

“How old are you?”

“I’ll be 19 this year. It should be similar in this world’s standards as well.”

“I’m 21.”

Should I reply that maturity has nothing to do with age? No, there’s a chance that she’ll just hear it as me bragging. If you look back at what she said a second ago, then, even if I don’t tell her, she’s most likely already aware of this.

I should shift the conversation by complimenting her.

“So you have a young face. I thought that you were younger than me.”

“No matter how much you praise the moon, you can’t stop the sun from rising.”

“It’s not lip service. Your skin is clean and your hair is smooth.”

Although Raya didn’t respond, she didn’t blush either. She merely pulled back her shoulders as if she were uncomfortable with the compliments. Although every female in this world wasn’t as difficult as the Silver Lion Earl, they weren’t as easy as Sii and Kina either.

Of course, that’s different according to how you compliment them.

“It must be nice for Aresa to have someone like you so close to her.”

Raya twitched. Aresa let out a breath.

“..... Yup, not particularly. She’s really violent when she’s moody after all.”

“A-Aresa!”

“.....Ah, sorry. But it’s the truth......”

Both Aresa and Raya lowered their heads with flustered expressions on their faces. Even while like that, the two approached one another and grabbed the other’s hand. Their action was natural and didn’t have any superfluousness to it. Raya, who had turned to look back at me, no longer had any signs of discomfort in her eyes.

“Tsk. If it’s like this, then I’ll have to keep leaving the cooking for the reception of guests to you. But don’t get too elated about this. I’ll make sure to take in all of your tips in no time.”

“All right. Next time, I’ll teach you how to bake snacks.”

“Thanks.”

Raya made an embarrassed smile.



Like so, as I continued to do Sii's tasks in her stead, night had soon arrived. I spoke with my head lowered while in the Silver Lion Earl's office.

“---That's everything that happened today. Earl, if I acted out of place or did something wrong, then punish me accordingly.”

It was a routine report. After I declared that I belonged to the Silver Lion Earl, I planned to repeat this procedure every night. After giving a report on the things that happened during that day, the decisions I made on that day, and the reason behind those respective decisions, I asked the Earl for her judgment. Moreover, I also gave her reports about the things that were going to happen, the decisions I'll be making during those times, and the reason behind those respective decisions. After doing that, I would then ask for her permission to do them.

I won't do something that'll harm the Silver Lion Earl's dignity.

If I did or if I had to do it, then I would explain it to her beforehand and apologize.

The fact that I'm the Silver Lion Earl's possession, I ascertained this fact every day.

There was only one thing that I excluded from those routine reports. My long-term goal of receiving an apology from her.

The Silver Lion Earl whistled.

“Ah hah ha. Hm, I don't really see anything you did today as having gone out of bounds or wrong. Albeit it's still weird that a squire is doing the tasks of a maid.”

I wordlessly kept my head lowered. There was a chance that saying anything related to Sii would upset the Silver Lion Earl.

It seems that was the right answer. With her head leaning against her hand, the Silver Lion Earl didn't say anything more about it. Instead, she brought up something else.

"By your report, it seems there's a yapping dog who's been following you around. How about it, Mr. Yujin---should I call her here and lecture her a bit?"

"It's fine."

"Hmm, it's okay to accept my offer, you know? The fact that there are fellows who don't recognize the people that are above and below them is the same in any world. That's why the Laugh Hunters are able to make a living."

"Sorry. I don't watch Infinite Challenge."

"You, are you even a Korean?"

It's troubling if I hear that from an otherworlder.

"Lately, it hasn't been a program of that extent. An eternal king doesn't exist."

"Hmn. Even though the title of the show is Infinite Challenge, they aren't infinite when it comes to that challenge, huh? This is what they call a contradicting irony in Korea, right?"

Zia was like this as well, but these two really say some old-fashioned bad jokes. It's probably because of the gap between when Ahyeon was here and when I had arrived. I've been diligently updating them, but it seems the road we have to take is still long.

In any case, I succeeded in changing the topic. The Silver Lion Earl waved her hand.

“Stand properly, Mr. Yujin.”

I stood. The Silver Lion Earl gestured for me to approach her by bobbing her toes and then pulled me into a hug. A fragrance that felt as if mercury, coated in the scent of roses, was filling my chest. Her fluffy coat made me feel as if I were descending into a deep chasm.

“Good boy, good boy, Mr. Yujin. If you keep being well-behaved like this, then I’ll dote on you. I’ll dote on you lots and lots. I’ll make you into the general of endearingness, you know? Ah hah hah ha.”

The Silver Lion Earl---was patting my head. Instead of just wordlessly receiving the patting, I got down on one knee in order to make it easier for her to stroke my head. The Silver Lion Earl chuckled and crossed her legs before passing me a file.

“Now then, Mr. Yujin. This is your work for today.”

The City of Confinement.

The settled population was approximately 20,000. The average number of the unsettled population was approximately 5,000. The area of the city was roughly 7 square kilometers. The key industries of this city were the industrial industry, the mining industry, and the manufacturing industry.

This wasn’t a major city.

The fact that a city of this size wasn’t considered a ‘major city’ in this world, which at a glance looked as if it were still in the Middle Ages, meant that, besides the fact that this world’s productive capacity was being supported by magic, the world was simply that advanced. People who starved to death existed and infectious diseases occasionally went around, but those things weren’t dire. The ‘Union of Agriculture’, ‘Council of Craftsmen’, and the ‘Alchemy Fortress’ were doing their jobs properly and they continued to openly prove that they were veteran factions even among the 12 Factions of the World. The reason why the City of Confinement, which was managed by the Silver Lion Earl, was considered nothing more than a medium-

sized town was understandable.

However, just because the size of the city was small didn't mean that there was that little number of things to manage as well. Even in Samwon Highschool, which had a little over 400 enrolled students, incidents occurred nearly every day. Hoping for nothing to happen in this city that has to shoulder every activity done by around 25,000 humans, starting from when they leave their beds and until they return to their beds at night, would be excessively greedy.

"I'll say this now, but even if you're doing Mikatni's adopted daughter's tasks in her stead, hmph. Like I said, that's a maid's job, right? Because it isn't Mr. Yujin's job. Therefore, even if you're exhausted from doing maid work, Mr. Yujin. The number of things Mr. Yujin has to do won't be reduced."

"I know. Do I have to read the paper?"

"YesYes. Reading commence."

"Okay. Your Excellency the Earl, in the waterway of the mining district yesterday....."

"Translate it into Korean and read it."

"In the waterway of the mining district yesterday, the two corpses that were discovered were both females. Not only were they contaminated by the precipitation which flowed down from the open storage area, but because they had no possessions whatsoever on them, we were unable to find out anything more about them. Seeing that there were no missing person reports, we assume that they're foreigners from outside of the city. Report written by Roroa, Assistant Commissioner of the guards. That's it."

"Hmm, what should be done?"

"Can't you figure out who they are by summoning a relative through a catalyst of life that's smeared on their bodies?"

“Eck~ it’s probably possible, but, I wonder what should be done about the assistant knight who’s telling his lord to feel up a rotten corpse. In any case, think about it logically.”

“Sorry. I’m an advocate of efficiency after all.”

“Hm. For starters, I don’t want to touch dead bodies, and the possibility that such catalysts were all washed away by the water is Humpty Dumpty.”

“Fifty Fifty. You’re saying that it’s a 50:50 chance, right?”

“You’re quite the explanation freak. That’s right. Moreover, if they’re foreigners and not citizens of this city, then they aren’t worth the trouble. If anything, it’ll probably only borrow trouble. That kind of feeling, you know? Something like that.”

“So it’s a problem of jurisdiction?”

“Yeess. If they were just injured while within the city, then I could offer them medical treatment, but if they were discovered as corpses? The fact that their identities are unknown means that they might be nobles. That’s why, if they really are nobles, then this is now ‘Bothersome, the Beginning’^[2]. Thus, I’m contemplating whether I should bury them or not. Or will Mr. Yujin reveal a solution right here and now? Should I get you an armchair?”

“Sorry, but my head isn’t as good as that.”

“Ah hah ha, all right. Don’t mind, don’t mind! Let’s go to the next item on the agenda then. Read it.”

I did as I was told.

“I wish to make an appeal to the administration which is under the exclusive authorization of Your Excellency the Earl. My name is Mablo Ixidin and as an honorable resident of this city, I have repaid Your Excellency’s grace with the payment of taxes and my loyalty. The incident that had occurred to this loyal citizen may truly be

referred to as a curse which had been bestowed upon me by the Twelve Gods. In order to overcome it, I plea for a *Kurosotia*..... Mental Armor^[3].....”

“Kuh? Ah hah hah hah ha, ah~ you’re not wrong, but, ukuku!”

That damn Zia.

“I plea for a brave warrior to be sent. The issue which I am currently undergoing is a conflict that involves the usage of water. Although it has always been arranged so that I’m allowed to use more water, which is bestowed upon us by Your Excellency the Earl, from the upper-level, Carlson Viratch, who must receive divine retribution, has been ignoring that settlement and has been claiming that I do not have the rights to take the water from the upper-level. I am unable to acknowledge this since I personally pay more taxes than Viratch’s family does as a whole, so I believe that it’s obvious that I have more rights than he does to use the water on the upper-level. That’s it.”

“Mhm, but your literature skill has really gone up by a lot.”

“My speaking and writing ability are still at a ghastly level.”

“Even so, if you consider how much time you had to study, then you’re doing well. Kuhuhu, the development of your reading ability is especially wonderful. And so, Mr. Yujin, what’re your thoughts on this civil complaint?”

“A dispute about water concessions. I feel like these sorts of incidents have been occurring a lot more recently.”

“The flow out from the central source of water has weakened after all. This is something that happens all the time around this time of the year. All of the citizens know this as well. Be patient since this will be resolved if you wait, saying something like this, although it’s a model answer, this is a problem that involves waaater.”

“Is there no other method to supply water besides the waterway?”

“There is. There are wells. It’s just that they’re small in number and mostly gathered around the northwest.”

“In the upper-class district, right?”

“YesYesYes. But they aren’t popular. In the first place, they’re the vestige of the military camps that were once created there in order to assault this castle which was a labyrinth a very long time ago. People who have a taste of the fine water from the waterways get addicted to that convenience after all. To the point where some people even fall into them and drown to death, just like the people who were mentioned earlier.”

“You shouldn’t say things like that about the people who’ve died. At any rate, this castle was a labyrinth?”

“Mm? Did I not tell you? Ah---mm. It’ll take too long to tell you everything so I’ll give you the exact details laterlater. Or you can go to the library and read a book. In simple terms, this castle, in precise terms, the basement of this castle, was the nest of a water dragon. In order to subdue that water dragon, there was a rather long punitive expedition. They were finally able to penetrate the outer wall and strike the base that was inside, but it took a long period of time before they were able to capture the castle entirely. Within this water dragon raid, which if I had to give it a name, then I’d call it the ‘Asylum Origin’, the person who got the last hit was the founder of my household.”

The Silver Lion Earl exhaled a proud gust of air from her nose.

“That’s why, this city is called Water Dragon(水龍)^[4] City now.”

“I, thought it was called the City of Confinement(收容).”

“It’s a play on words! Ah hah ha, Since it’s a place where a dragon of water had once lived, Water Dragon City. Since you’re confined within a bunch of ramparts, City of Confinement!”

“Aren’t the terms ‘water dragon’ and ‘confinement’ completely

different in this world's language?"

"That's right. That's why the only people who're able to notice this play on words are the ones who know Korean. Me, Zia, Sophna, and also---well. It's something like that. Now you're also one of those people. How is it? Is it not moving? My ambiguous sense of language."

"I think it's a chuuni-like^[5] sense of language."

"Hugugugugu. How ill-mannered. In any case, so--- what should be done?"

"Like last time, I think it'd be a good idea to let them access the water supply on a rotation according to their tax payments. As you said, since this is a water shortage issue, we should take care of this quickly. If someone goes against this or if there are any additional complaints, then inform them to come to the castle."

"Hm, I see that it's the same as always. Don't you have more fun ideas?"

"What are you going to do by finding fun in a water shortage?"

"That's right, isn't it? It's a water issue after all."

Like that, I assisted the Silver Lion Earl in several more cases and dealt with my duties for the day. There were two more cases involving the management of water rights, a lawsuit, and two trial cases. When everything was finished, it was already the middle of the night.

"Today was another fruitful day."

"Yeah."

"Mr. Yujin, doesn't your school start soon? You said that you're going to be in your third year of high school this year. This isn't really a good time for you to be messing around in a place like this, you

know? This Silver Lion Earl is curious as to whether or not Mr. Yujin doesn't have to go to school."

Instead of asking her what mouth she was saying those words out of, I shrugged.

"I made an arrangement."

"An arrangement, is it?"

"Yup. There's this kid called Saei..... it'll work out somehow. If it doesn't, then I'll give up on my high school records and just take qualification exams."

Rather than that, I'm more worried that Chanmi's group will use my absence as an opportunity to do something stupid. The Silver Lion Earl put her hands behind her head.

"Well, if that's the case, then that's a relief. Of course, since Mr. Yujin is going to continue living in this world, it doesn't matter."

Those words spilled out.

The Silver Lion Earl giggled and stuck out her foot. The moment I got down on one knee in order to massage her foot, her other leg came out and wrapped around my neck. It was similar to earlier, but this time, I was hugged by her leg and not her arms. My face became buried between her thighs. A similar scent and sensation, except, it felt as if a thicker and sharper sensation was scraping its way down my spine.

This fellow was like this and her half-sibling was the same as well. Why do these two like squeezing my head on all 4 sides so much?

As if I were resisting, I tried to take my head out. The Silver Lion Earl immediately put strength into her leg and blocked my escape. Although I had instinctively moved my hand up and grabbed the Silver Lion Earl's knee, because the back of my hand had been smacked, I ended up quickly letting go. The only region of my body

which I could use was the area above my neck. Each time I moved my head around in order to pull it out, with her small thighs, the Silver Lion Earl would occasionally pretend to let me go before pulling me back in with her calf. Like this, she thwarted my escape several times.

Eventually, around the time when I felt as if I were going to have trouble breathing, I heard a laughter that was similar to Royal gifts being given away.

“Ah hah hah ha.”

I could feel a slightly wet sensation on her thigh. Her scent became a bit thicker. The Silver Lion Earl's, sweat.

“That was fun. As expected, a light exercise helps in refreshing my mood.”

The Silver Lion Earl reached out and stroked my head. As she did that, she released me from her leg, but it took some time before I was able to catch my breath. Once I arduously raised my head, I could see the Silver Lion Earl looking down at me through my glasses which had become completely clouded.

Each time I breathed, my vision went back and forth between being blurry and being clear. A rose scent that had been drenched in spring rain.

Once I opened my mouth slightly as if I were pleading for her clemency, a smile appeared on the Silver Lion Earl's lips.

“You're adorable.”

“.....Are you, satisfied?”

“Yes. I feel heavenly.”

In order to not spoil her fun, I didn't resist seriously. However, if I just stayed still then she wouldn't enjoy it at all so I pretended to at

least struggle. A little bit at first, struggling more and more as time went on, and finally, as if I had given up due to exhaustion, I acted as if I were leaving my fate solely in the Earl's hands.

I'm not sure if the Earl had seen through my performance or not. In any case, she was satisfied, so she let me go.

"Your clothes are a mess."

"Whose fault do you think that is?"

"Yup yup. But you should still go around while wearing your clothes properly. How do they say it? One of the basics as a member of society? Especially since you belong to a lord like me. If you go around while in a messy state, then even my dignity would go up on a chopping board. Mikatni's adopted daughter?"

The Silver Lion Earl grinned and turned to look at one of the corners of the office. She gave an order to Sii who was standing in the corner the entire time with both of her arms gathered in front of her.

"Tidy Yujin up."

".....Yes, Your Excellency."

Sii approached. She straightened my disheveled clothes and buttoned up the places that had become unbuttoned. Once Sii was at the point where she was taking out her handkerchief in order to wipe my glasses, her hands were shaking slightly. The Silver Lion Earl watched us with her legs crossed.

This was also something that happened every day.

Make it clear that I am someone's possession. Make Sii aware of this.

It most likely wasn't solely because of the Earl's inborn sadism. No matter how you think about it, in the end, it seems she didn't fancy the fact that I had gotten Sii's arm back for her. Possessiveness. An

obsession with taking the initiative. It was similar to what Joo Chanmi and Eun Minseon had displayed.

“Finished.”

Fortunately, Sii was able to endure today as well.

“Hmm.”

In reverse, it seems that displeased the Silver Lion Earl. Although the Silver Lion Earl glared at Sii who was backing away, the Earl merely shrugged her shoulders. If there’s nothing to complain about, then even the Earl is unable to do anything.

“You can go and rest.”

I received her order and left.



Sii, whose arm has yet to fully heal, was staying in the sick room.

“Uuu…… Really, that girl! Can’t be forgiven!”

Sii shouted that out the instant we had arrived at the sick room. I comforted her.

“You endured well, Miss Sii.”

“Yujin, are you okay? The scent that girl coated you in, is it not unpleasant?”

Sii latched onto me with a teary face. I shook my head.

“It’s fine.”

“Mm~~ I’m not fine! If I don’t overlay her scent with my own quickly!”

Are you a dog?

No, I heard that cats do something similar to this as well.

“Yujin, lay on the bed for a moment!”

Sii forcefully knocked me over on top of the bed and mounted me. Although she had a scrawny body, the thighs were areas that were inevitably plump. Sii became red because of her anger towards the Silver Lion Earl and the embarrassment she was feeling because of what she was currently doing, so it felt as if I were being massaged by a roll of bread that was just steamed.

Due to the gap between our strengths, I couldn't resist anyway. Seeing Sii's face burning with a sense of duty didn't really make me want to resist either. Sii dismounted me while panting.

“Okay! You're fine now!”

Her body fragrance smelled like whipped cream that was left out to dry at room temperature. Before going to sleep today, I should wipe her down with a hot towel and some soap. I'll wash up as well.

“Another day is over.”

“Yup…… Yujin, worked a lot today. Are you not tired?”

I weighed up my body condition.

“The tasks that I do with the Earl is fine since I only have to use my head, but the maid jobs are indeed a bit tiring. It's been a long time since I did this much physical labor after all.”

“Uuu…… sorry. Those girls, they're just giving me their tasks all at once. Even though all they do is play around, they're really underhanded.”

“There was also quite the number of tasks that were difficult to be called odd jobs.”

I spoke while taking out an iPad. I then turned to look at Sii and waited. Although Sii looked as if she were clueless at first, she soon let out an ‘ah’ sound and went into deep ‘thought’.

She spoke a moment later.

“I think they were trying to, forestall you, Yujin.”

I waited.

“Although I don’t really want to say this myself, the things that Yujin said he had to do, I normally don’t do those sorts of things. No matter who the person is, they wouldn’t assign important work to someone who’s in a position like mine. The worry that I’ll mess up the job would be their first concern. And if I mess it up, that’s not something that can be resolved by harassing me. Someone will have to do the work that was messed up. They’ll naturally work 2-3 more times, and their time to rest will shrink. Inconvenient work like that, they usually won’t do it.”

I was delighted. As I had told her yesterday, Sii had started to ‘think’.

“Yes. For a similar reason with what Miss Sii had said, in order to forestall me, they were waiting while having prepared things to do beforehand. I think this is around a 7.”

“What about the remaining 3?”

“It’s just that they had a lot of things to do overall. They seemed busy with the reception of guests.”

“Ah…… it’s like that during this time. Yudia…… Sir Yudia, is currently visiting.”

Yudia Batsand.

Zia’s teacher. The Violet Swamp. The royal courier of the Martial Origin.

“He received repairs on his weapon from my foster-sister last time she was here…… and the fact that he’s able to wield his spear well now was confirmed.”

The culprit who had severed Sii’s arm because of the Silver Lion Earl’s request.

“Therefore, Sir Yudia’s preparations are complete. The arena from now on, it’ll be heated. Naturally, big guests are scheduled to arrive one after another.”

I’ll be busy for a while helping my teacher’s work---this was what Zia Batsand had told me.

“Does Miss Sii perhaps know what sorts of guests will be arriving?”

“Mm~~ I’m not sure. If I use last year as an example, then…… Her Excellency’s cousin on her mother’s side had come. A prince came as well.”

“A prince, is it?”

“He’s Her Excellency’s suitor. I heard that he has no right of succession because his rank is low.”

A suitor. huh?

For someone like that Silver Lion Earl? Although it was doubtful, if you look back at it, then it was reasonable. Within this world that had adopted monarchy and nobility, there’s no way that they would leave alone a lone orphan girl who has her own territory and rules it as an earl.

“He’s incredibly pretty. He can use magic well and I heard he’s really strong. And for him to even be a prince, that’s a young girl’s dream person.”

Sii’s eyes, which were giving me a sidelong glance, were shining like a glimmering twilight.

So she had this sort of maidenlike side to her, I smiled due to this thought.

“Is Miss Sii jealous?”

“Mm~ I’m not particularly jealous. I have my own prince.”

Sii’s eyes, which were staring at me, changed and appeared like a pair of burning embers.

So she had this sort of maidenlike side to her. I erased my smile due to this thought.

“Because I did Miss Sii a favor?”

“Do you think it’s not good if it starts from that sort of trigger?”

I adjusted my glasses. In the end, the reason why I fell in love with Minhee was like that as well.

“That seems a bit far from ‘a young girl’s dream’ like Miss Sii mentioned.”

“Mm~~ that’s right. It’s lacking a fateful feeling. If you say it in other terms, then it’s like saying anyone was fine as long as they were nice to me. Nevertheless, Yujin was the first person to ever show me kindness, get upset for my sake, and call me his friend. Those things have a clear meaning to me.”

Her red eyes were directed towards me with a type of heat contained within them.

“I like, Yujin.”

I closed my eyes and opened them.

“Should I give an answer now?”

Sii’s expression became flustered.

“Yes~~! I-I’ll be happy if you did. But I can wait. So it’s fine to do it slowly.”

“No, I’ll give an answer now,” I spoke. “It’s impossible.”

I spoke while gripping onto my beads tightly.

“There’s a person who I like back in Korea.”

People who have faith are unable to form a relationship with the mundane world. My past experience of being led to a church by my aunt’s hand when I was young was still affecting me even to this very day. It was mentally impossible for me to go out with someone other than my goddess, Minhee.

I’m sure that it’s physically impossible as well.

Sii looked at me……. She spoke.

“Is that so?”

She nodded.

“I see.”

She went silent.

“Ehehe…… mm~~ okay. ……Mm. Mmm.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Mmn! Yujin has nothing to be sorry about. Ehehe…… Ah, in any case, let’s go back to the main topic.”

Sii spoke while smiling widely. I patted her.

“Yes. A guest from Her Excellency’s mother’s side. The prince. And if there’s someone else who’s worth mentioning, then…….”

“The president of the Fedchants had come as well. Although the

Tower Lord of the Mage Tower was going to come together with them, Her Excellency refused. That's all I can remember right now."

"In conclusion, several guests that even the Silver Lion Earl can't handle thoughtlessly will be visiting as well."

"Are you asking this because of the distinguished service thing you were talking about before?"

"That's correct. No matter what, I'll have to make a connection with them while they're here. Moreover, if I'm going to do that, then I'll have to go to the arena soon and meet Zia and Yudia."

Zia had said that it'll be difficult to see her for a while, but I'll be making that prediction of hers wrong. While I was thinking that, Sii, who was avoiding my eyes, came into my line of sight.

"I'm not saying that I'll be going immediately. I'll visit the arena after thinking of a couple of methods to deal with Yudia."

Failing for the second time must be avoided. As I was making that resolve, Sii had a concerned look on her face.

"Don't strain yourself, Yujin. I said it before, but you shouldn't hurry."

I gratefully listened to her advice.



My daily life flowed by like that for a while.

I woke up at dawn and did Sii's work in her stead. At night, I gave a routine report to the Silver Lion Earl. After that, I did some paperwork before returning to the sick room with Sii once more. It was tiring, but I had a tighter schedule than this back during the 8 Years' War. I also grew more accustomed to the schedule as the days

went by.

My relationship with the other maids somewhat improved as well.

“Yujin. I made some snacks like how you taught me before…….”

“Yup, it’s good. You did well.”

“……Are you sure I really did it well? I feel like the taste is a bit lacking compared to what you make.”

“Call me when you make it next time. We can make it together.”

Of course, my relationship didn’t improve with all of the maids.

“Woof! I’ll definitely unmask you!”

Kina especially kept threatening me while following me around.

“Woof! Stop petting me!”

Even if a dog-eared beast girl, who isn’t even 1 meter tall, were to do that, she’ll only look adorable.

“Woof…… d-don’t pet, hya wan, don’t touch my ear!”

Really adorable.

“Waan…… bark, garururu…… That’s not it! S-S-Stop-petting-me!”

If I make her too upset, then she’ll transform into an 180cm tall monster, but it was worth the risk.

I didn’t spend my daily life solely like that. I also did something as well. The opportunity to give a detailed explanation about what that something is will arrive one day. I’ll just say that it’s a sensitive task that can cause misunderstandings. It’s quite the sensitive task, so

when someone called out to me the instant I finished doing that task and had come out of the room, I was really surprised.

“Ah, you.”

It was the leader type maid who had caused that one incident on top of the rampart---Mari.

“.....Mari?”

Mari let out a grunt.

“It’s, Mari. Pronounce it properly.”

“Mari.” The vocalization was subtly different. **“What is it?”**

“I should be asking you that. The place you just came out of, that’s the female bathroom, you know?”

Mari asked while narrowing her eyes at me. I calmly put my arms behind my back.

“Yup. I cleaned it a bit. It’s a place that’s used by Miss Sii after all.”

“.....Are you still calling her ‘Miss’?”

The best way to change the topic was to bring up a topic that the opposition was more interested in. I nodded.

“Yeah. So what’s up? Are you perhaps here to visit Miss Sii?”

“Of course not. Do I look like a person who’d do that?”

She didn’t. That’s why it was perplexing. But then again,

“Then why are you standing in front of the door of the sick room which Miss Sii is residing in while holding a basket of fruits?”

“I found it on the way here. I thought that it might be yours.”

It seems Mari wanted to talk in a haughty attitude. Albeit, she must have realized that it was too much for her in the middle of her sentence since her fully exposed forehead became dyed in a scarlet color.

It'd be entertaining to look at her vacantly until her forehead becomes fully cooked, but since it'd only be entertaining and nothing more, I decided not to.

“Thanks. I must have dropped it this morning.”

“Hmph. You better keep your mind straight from now on, pervert.”

“Do you want to go in?”

“Am I mad? This was all the business I had here. I'll be going back now.”

I, with the basket now in my arms, took out a fruit that looked as if an apple and a peach were fused together and bit into it. It tasted as if it had the same sugar content as a grape and a similar texture to a banana. Mari, who was about to turn around, narrowed her eyes.

“You should wait until the person leaves, student body president. I'm not sure what social position that prestige of yours had, but it's clear to me that it's the lowest one. Signs that you're uneducated sticks out, you know?”

I chewed a bit before swallowing it down. I lightly turned the apple-peach with the tip of my fingers and bit into it again.

“Sorry. I was thirsty. I want to compensate you, but is there anything that you're hoping for? Something like a service, maybe?”

I had two bites but I didn't feel any particular problem with my body. That means that she didn't mess around with the food in order to do something to Sii. Of course, if she did, then she would have shown a more dramatic reaction the moment she saw me eat one.

Fortunately, Mari didn't realize that I had suspected her.

“.....You know. How long do you think it's been since Sii's arm was cut off because you were doing things like that? The bathroom thing earlier as well..... if you have the time to mess around, then be more devoted to Her Excellency the Earl.”

While purposely making a surprised expression on my face, I folded my arms behind my back.

“Hm? Wasn't Miss Sii's arm severed because she stole something? Sii herself stated that she was framed, though.....”

“Are you an idiot!?”

Mari looked at me with wide eyes.

“.....No, you are an idiot...... Of course, if you weren't an idiot, then you wouldn't have done something like that to me back at the rampart. Yup, an idiot. Idiot. Id-idot.”

Alshi was like this as well, but do I look like that much of an idiot to the girls of this world? If I recall the fact that Miyeong and the person who sat behind me both treated me like an idiot, then I guess I should change it to 'the girls of all worlds'.

“Don't take in events exactly as they've occurred. Only idiots do that. Her Excellency, you know, she was upset because you went around making yourself appear cheap. The complete opposite of what you blabbered crudely about.”

Mari boasted as she placed one hand on her hip and she waved her

index finger and thumb of her other hand. She was a girl who was surprisingly easy to understand..... she was.

If you wrap it up, then that's probably it.

Instead of saying that.

“Who told you that?”

“..... Hey, that's what I'm referring to as wrong. Does it always have to be said for you to understand? You can tell by just looking. I'm not sure which side is the one that's slow-witted.”

Mm.

This is--- a bit weird.

No, it's really weird. Is this what you call a girl's unique intuition? But, it doesn't seem.....

“Yujin?”

“Ah, sorry,” I concluded my thought. **“The thought that I should reflect on myself, had popped up.”**

“Of course you should reflect on yourself. If you did well, then do you think that girl's arm would have ended up like that? In that girl's position, what sort of disaster is this? I'm not sure how it's like in your world, but if something that was once small starts to inflate, then the people of this world would want to stomp on it.”

That was the same in my world as well. I believe that it was a fanciless topic.

“Ah~ Be that as it may, that doesn't mean that I'm worried about you, so don't misunderstand this weirdly. I'm only telling you this because it'd be unpleasant for me to watch

quietly.”

Mari spoke with one eye shut and both of her arms slightly spread out.

Hmm.

“Thanks.”

“What is this? You’re strangely docile today.”

“I’m just being grateful for the things I should be thankful about. If you have any other pieces of advice, then I’ll gladly listen to them.”

“Hmph. It would have been good if you were docile like this from the beginning. If you were, then the other maids wouldn’t have had made those sorts of testimonies in order to step on Sii.”

“You as well?”

Mari’s shoulder slightly froze. A faint scent of grape tickled the end of my nose.

Was this it?

Was she feeling guilty for what happened to Sii’s arm? So that’s why she came here with a basket of fruits as a symbol of apology? She didn’t really appear like she had that weak of a mentality, but people occasionally do things different to their outer appearance.

However, Mari shook her head.

“I, didn’t do it.”

She continued.

“I admit that--- I put out a similar idea. But like I said on the roof, that was just a joke that came out during an idle

talk. I didn't plan on really doing it nor did I actually do it. To make a false testimony. Not only do I have my own pride, but the price was an arm being severed. That sort of cruel punishment."

She was right. If you exclude the fact that the person who had dragged a weak-skinned girl out into the direct rays of the sun shouldn't be the one to be saying this, that is. As expected, Mari must have been aware of this fact as she then averted her gaze.

"Well, it's true that I handled Sii roughly. Nevertheless, there's a limit to that as well. For the time being, I, and the majority of the other maids believe this as well, but an arm was too severe."

Even within this world where magical healing methods exist, was this what an ordinary person's sensibility was like?

"Adding to that, think about it. The fact that that happened once means that it can happen once more, but how can someone guarantee that the target won't be them at that time? I truly did not wish for this to happen. But those girls did something needless....."

Mari paused in the middle of her sentence and clenched her teeth. After she took a moment to calm her breathing down, she hesitantly looked up at me.

"Do you not believe me?" After asking that, she then placed her hand against her forehead and sighed. **".....No, it doesn't matter. If you think about it, then it's not like I'm inclined to convince you or anything."**

"No. I should apologize for doubting you carelessly."

The moment I lowered my head and apologized to her, Mari's eyes grew wide.

"You're really docile today."

“If I organize it then: You and the faction you lead weren’t involved in Sii’s punishment. However, there is another faction and that faction was involved. Is this right?”

“Faction? We maids aren’t mages from the Mage Tower nor are we members of the Twelve Knight Branches. We aren’t as high-sounding as that, but…… if you narrow it down, then I guess it’s sort of like that.”

“Can you give me information on that faction?”

“No. Like I said, not only are our groups not high-sounding like factions, but I feel like I’ve already said too much.”

It’d be a good idea to not latch onto her any further. Even this much was enough to call a harvest.

“Thank you for the advice. I’ll definitely remunerate you later on.”

“You don’t have to reward me……. I’ve said it several times, but I have no interest in your perverted services. If you’re really that grateful for the advice and want to do something in return, then, that’s right.”

Mari’s lips approached my ears.

“Go get crushed somewhere.”

I’m grateful, but that’s a request that I can’t oblige to do.



After Mari had left, I waited for a moment before I opened the door to the sickroom and entered. Sii made a relieved expression the instant she saw me.

“Mm~~ Yujin, nothing happened, right? I was worried.”

“There’s nothing to be worried about.”

“But the thing Yujin said he was doing, it’s dangerous, isn’t it? If you get caught…….”

“There’s no way that would happen. Rather than that, have some of these.”

“Ah, fruits……. Did you go to the kitchen?”

“No, I met Mari in front of the sick room.”

“Eck, Mari!? Why!?”

I told her about the conversation I had with Mari. Sii furrowed her brow.

“Mari, that girl……. She’s really arrogant. She thinks she can do anything and goes around giving needless pieces of advice. So annoying.”

“She herself most likely believes that what she did was out of good will.”

“That’s what’s annoying.”

“I see. Miss Sii, do you know how the factions between the maids are roughly established? Although I’ve grasped the minor power relations between the maids while I was working, and I intend to continue getting a grasp of it, being able to see the larger framework is a separate issue.”

“Hm~ I don’t know it exactly either, but if I were to divide them largely, then the people who’ve been working here and the people who had started to work here recently, it’s sort of like that. For example, Mari and I belong to the latter.”

This was a bit of a surprise.

“That girl, Mari, was she not a veteran who had been working here for a long time?”

“Her actual work experience isn’t that long. After the mass dismissal incident that was said to have happened a long time ago, she was hired here around the same time that I was. Actually, the majority of the maids entered around that time.”

“I see. So if you call those people the new faction and the people who were already here the pre-established faction, then…….”

“The pre-established faction are the people who’ve been working while having established Miss Sophna as their key individual. There are also people whose families have continued to serve under the Earl’s House since long before, and as much as that is the case, compared to the new faction, their loyalty to Her Excellency the Earl is incomparably deep.”

Sophna. I’ve been hearing her name a lot recently. If I believe in Mari’s words, then that means the maids who were involved in Sii’s arm being cut off were a part of the pre-established faction which mainly serves under Sophna.

“If that’s the case, then does that mean that the person called Sophna wanted Miss Sii’s arm to be cut off?”

“Mm~……. I wonder. I don’t think so. They probably just complied with Her Excellency’s persistence. That person, she doesn’t have much interest in the things that happen in the mundane world. In the first place, she shut herself in her research room and doesn’t come out.”

Yudia mentioned something about a research room when talking about Sophna, didn’t he? If I add all of the information that was presented together, then: “Is she a mage?”

“Yup. Miss Sophna is both the head of the vassals and the exclusive mage of the Earl’s House. She’s a title possessor who had received her title through her abilities and I heard that she had *Ex’ ia*.”

“That *Ex’ia*…… what does ‘ascended’ mean exactly? I recall hearing it once when Abria and Yudia were talking.”

“Uhm…… it refers to when one’s body changes as a result of continuous training. There are various changes, but I heard that one of the changes is your lifespan increasing for an incredible amount.”

So it’s a fantasy setting here as well.

Though it’s always been a fantasy-setting since the start…….

“I heard that Sir Yudia had done that ‘ascension’ as well.”

I thought about Yudia. I recalled his child-like appearance, the fact that he was Zia’s teacher despite that appearance, and the time when he mentioned that he had experienced 187 springs. Although I thought that what he said was possibly related to either a time period gap, a skill, a silly joke, the difference of seasons compared to Earth and here, etc, all of which being things that often appear in light novels, it turned out to be something that was more fantastical than that.

“Returning back to Miss Sophna. I heard that when Her Excellency the Earl was young, Miss Sophna was Her Excellency’s private teacher. In truth, I heard that the previous earl…… that the current earl’s father was taught by her as well. She’s that old of a person, she’s quiet, and there are actually times when I forget that she even exists.”

Does that mean she’s in a no touch zone? Within the same context, I could understand why Mari’s right to speak was peculiarly strong despite being a part of the new faction. Also within the same context, I could also understand why an existence like a head maid didn’t exist.

“By the way, Yujin. What are you doing right now?”

“Ah.” I lifted my hand off of my iPad. “I’m currently constructing a database. Do you want to see?”

“Database?”

Sii sat down and squeezed up next to me. While I was perceiving that, Sii became startled.

“Eck, what is this? Picture…… that’s what this is called, right? This is a picture of Mari.”

“Yes, it’s a picture. Personal details are written underneath that image, and underneath those details, I’m writing down whatever facts I’m able to figure out about the person.

“Ah, really…… Mm~~ It’s amazing. It’s neat and easy to read. Did you make this for other people as well?”

“Yes. Moreover, I didn’t only make character sheets, but I’ve been also organizing new information as I obtain them like the size of the city, the imports, prices in this world, the races, the political powers, etc.”

It was one of the habits that I raised up while going through the 8 Years’ War. Sii, who was looking through the iPad with a face filled with admiration, returned back to the character sheets. It seems she was interested in those the most. The girl who was making a Yudia-like smile while peeking at the personal information of her colleagues suddenly fixed her line of sight onto a single spot.

“Yujin. What’s this here?”

“Ah, that’s---.”

It was at that moment.

Knock, knock.

A knocking sound could be heard.

“……?”

Sii turned towards the door. I thought about the people who could

possibly visit this place. For starters, Zia. Not only did she say that she wouldn't be able to come for the time being, but there's no way that she would do something like knocking on the door. The Earl. If she needed to see me, then she would just summon me. After that was the possibility that Mari would revisit. This had a rather high chance, but.....

Was it impossible?

If it were one of those three people that had come to my mind, then the lock wouldn't be turning right now without even waiting for our response.

“.....!?”

Sii shrunk back the moment she saw the lock silently turn without emanating even a clicking sound. I got into a posture where I held the basket in my right arm while I stuck my other arm forward. The door soon opened.

Two masked maids walked into the sickroom.

It was a mask that didn't cover only the face, but the entire head as well.

There were holes punctured here and there on the masks. The holes with erratic sizes had a strangely regular distance placed between one another. The black holes were all filled to the brim with brown lumps. The visual stimulation that the masks gave off was unpleasant. It was like staring at an antler up close. It was my first time seeing a mask that gave off such an ominous feeling.

Within their gloved hands, they were holding daggers that had an appearance which was as bizarre as their masks.

“W-Who......”

The moment Sii had uttered that word, I stretched out my arm and tossed the fruit basket.

The instant the maid in the front had struck the basket aside, I had already moved from my position and had charged directly in front of that masked maid. Without displaying any signs of panic, the masked maid took a step back and swung down her dagger. I blocked her swing by grabbing onto her wrist and reached my other hand out towards her mask.

There was no point in asking who they were. The fact that they came here wearing masks meant that they wanted to maintain their anonymity. If that was the case, then I had to expose that anonymity. Although there was a chance that they could decide to take lethal actions if their identities were to be exposed, there was no point in worrying about that when the opposition had already swung her dagger. The best option was to subdue them and take off their masks.

Best options generally can't be achieved easily.

The second I touched the bottom part of the mask, bang.....! I felt a powerful shock coming from the side of my body. I rolled and collided with the wall. Within my shaking line of sight, I could see a masked maid in a firm kicking posture. It was a leg strength that went beyond common sense. It felt as if some sort of magically enhanced strength was involved there, but the exact details were unknown. It didn't appear like she could only do that a limited number of times and the masked maid seemed to consider that strength to be nothing special = Therefore, as much as she was accustomed to that strength, there was no reason for me to think further into it.

Approximately 1 second has passed since my first move.

The masked maid who had kicked me started to walk towards me while gripping onto her dagger. The other maid that was standing in the back started to walk towards Sii. I solved the issue of standing up and getting closer to Sii by rolling over to the side and pushing myself up.

I stood in front of the bed that Sii was laying down on.

The two masked maids paused for a second before they set their sights on me and resumed their approach.

This---was difficult.

The fact that I had tossed the basket, rushed towards them, abruptly tried to take off their mask, recovered quickly before standing in front of the bed, etc. This should have all been outside of their expectations. However, they didn't show any signs of panic. Was that it? I'm not sure about the person in the back, but the person at the front had calmly selected the most optimal actions and was acting upon them.

Their side had the physical strength advantage.

Their side had the numbers advantage.

Mental state, they also had---

“Aaaah……!”

Sii cried out and tossed her pillow.

Similar to when the basket I had tossed was struck aside, the masked maid in the front hit the pillow away without any hesitation. However, the maid in the back stopped. It wasn't because of the pillow. It was most likely because of Sii's shouting. With a cracking voice that was coated in a lot of anxiety and fear, Sii continued.

“I-I'll scream, so……!”

That volume itself was already more than enough to be considered as screaming.

“E-Even though I don't know who you are……! I-I'll call for help, so……! Until they come, I'll keep……! I-I'll keep shouting!”

Sii Garano Mikatni then stood beside me with shaking legs.

“.....”

I see my analysis was incorrect.

It seems the numbers were 2:2.

Thanks to Sii just now, it seems our side had an overall advantage in terms of mental state.

“Sii’s right! The fact that you’re wearing masks! That means it’d be a problem if you get caught!”

My throat hurt since I was shouting at a volume which I normally didn’t use. However, seeing the masked maid in the back hesitating meant that it was worth it.

If you looked at it from another perspective, then it meant that even in this moment the maid in the front still didn’t show any signs of panicking.

She did at least respond.

“Ha.”

It was a voice that was bizarrely modulated.

“If you’re going to scream, then go ahead.”

Without giving even an annoyed response, this was her reaction.

“Both the Azure Rose Knight and her teacher aren’t in this castle right now. There’s no way that the Earl would even come to this region of the castle. Even if other people were around, they won’t come to your help. There’s no one in this world who’d want to be involved in bothersome things.”

Damn it, this person.

“No matter how much you bark, no one will come.”

As expected--- this was difficult.

Summary of the situation. Surprise attack failed. Uproar operation succeeded half way. Succeeded in obtaining the knowledge that there's an individual gap between the two masked maids and I successfully got a reaction from them. However, in order to overcome this situation, there was a need to either subdue these two or escape.

Understanding the variables. We're currently located in the sickroom. We're standing with the bed behind us. We're three stories above ground. Sii is a patient. I'm a boy who isn't proficient at combat. The oppositions are both armed. Furthermore, one of them possesses a strength that at least comes close to Sii's own ability. The blade of their daggers is about 15cm.

All right.

I put my hand behind my back and grabbed onto the bed sheet.

“The fact that you’re going out of your way to say that! Means that you’ll actually be troubled! If any more time is dragged out!”

I shouted while holding out the sheet like a matador's cape. Although my mobility will go down like this, I can secure a defense that'll make up for that loss. The movement of the maid who had kicked me, even if it was better than I had expected, if the length of their daggers is only that long, then there's no way that I could be taken down in one strike if I have this defense.

Come.

If you approach---then I'll grab you and toss you down.

I could hear the sound of a tongue being clicked behind the mask. The masked maid in the front raised the hand she wasn't holding the dagger in and made a gesture. The second masked maid saw the gesture and stepped forward, so they were now standing side by side. So they intend to approach at the same time. Not towards me but

towards Sii. Of course, I'm not going to let them. It was at the moment a volatile atmosphere had settled over us.

I heard the sound of the window being opened behind me.

“Hiik…….”

I couldn't blame Sii for gasping. As expected, I had also received the same shock. Regardless, the fact that I didn't turn around carelessly was because it was obvious that the masked maids would rush forward the moment I did, however, did they really have another accomplice? Or did they have even more than that? For us to be in a situation where we're pressured on both fronts, this is really danger---

Our surroundings became dark for an instant.

The sole of a shoe slammed into the mask of one of the masked maids.

Bang…….!

Together with an impact that sounded like an explosion, the masked maid was sent flying. The crown of the masked maid's head hitting against the threshold of the door and the culprit behind the kick folding their legs superbly and landing directly in front of me happened nearly at the same time.



Flutter, the widely moving skirt caused a small, tepid gust to blow through the room.

Processing the situation---the fact that the person who had entered through the window jumped from their position, went over my head, and kicked the masked maid, was something I grasped only after everything had happened.

I recognized the person to be the other martial artist type maid who'd stick by Alshi's side.

“.....Eh, eck.....”

The continuing unforeseeable circumstances must have made something in Sii's head malfunction since she was only making weird noises. The reaction of the other masked maid who wasn't kicked was more practical than that. She immediately rushed forward. The martial artist maid swung her right arm, hitting the masked maid's attack to the side, and slammed her left hand into the masked maid's mask. Even though the masked maid's face had received a shock, she still took a step forward. Like so, the two exchanged blows for a while.

“Escape!”

The masked maid who was kicked aside uttered that after having barely pushed herself up. Without even waiting for a response, the masked maid turned around and ran out into the hallway. The other masked maid who was exchanging hits with the martial artist type maid turned around as well and ran away.

In an instant, the only ones remaining in the sickroom were me, Sii, and the martial artist maid who had saved us.

“.....You.”

I spoke.

The martial artist maid who was catching her breath turned towards me.

“It’s a relief that you are safe.”

After courteously getting down on one knee, she had said that.



By the looks of it, it seems I have the tendency to look at a person’s height and hair first whenever I meet someone. In the Silver Lion Earl’s case, she had a short stature and a silver-colored lion head. In Zia’s case, she had a tall stature and blue bobbed hair. Even in Sii’s case, she had a short stature and white bobbed hair. In the case of this maid, she had a similar body type as myself and short brunette hair.

The impression I felt when I met her for the first time didn’t subside even now in this situation where I was meeting her again. Her tanned brown skin stuck firmly to her body, making the outlines of her whole body appear distinctly. The veins protruding from the back of her hands, the embossed joints on her fingers, her hair which was cut short in order to prevent it from being grabbed, and her maid uniform, the size of which was shrunk in order to fit her body perfectly. Similar to Soo Hyeon and the person who was once sitting behind me, her impelling atmosphere proved that she was a martial artist more than anything else.

While she was still kneeling down on one knee, the girl looked up at me with emerald-like pupils. The cracks within her pupils were like a sapphire. It felt as if I were looking into a mirror made of jewels.

That’s right---a mirror.

In two different---meanings.

“A-Ariya, you…… what happened just now……?”

Sii spoke as if the tenseness in her body had all washed away at once. The girl called Ariya, without even glancing at Sii, stared at me.

“Hello.” After putting her hands together and greeting me with the 6 fingers gesture, the maid spoke. **“My name is Ariya Orgit.”**

She bowed her head in a well-disciplined manner. She tilted her upper body in a 45 degrees angle and, while also maintaining that stance, she continued.

“I heard from Miss Zia.”

As expected, there was something that came to mind when I heard that name. Ariya. Around the time when I was still in the basement, the maid who was caught by the guards while stealing the relics of the Silver Lion Earl’s mother. Although the Silver Lion Earl and Zia had never told me the maid’s name, it was a name that Sii had mentioned without much thought. Ariya.

Alshi’s lover.

“I heard that you had saved me.”

She raised her head in a well-disciplined manner. Raising her upper body up by 45 degrees. Ariya Orgit spoke while staring straight at me.

“I wish to repay your kindness.”

“Eck.”

Sii let out a confused sound. She apparently wasn’t able to comprehend the situation.

First, I gave Sii an explanation.

“The Silver Lion Earl’s speech, I wrote that for her.”

“.....Ah, was that it?”

With a shaking voice, Sii seemed to have understood. I felt like I knew what sort of expression she was making right now. An expression that appeared when the final nail which prevented you from looking down on the opposition had fallen off. As I’ve seen it

several times before and I had also done it myself, I knew what sort of sense of shame it'd eventually give to the people who'd make that sort of expression. That's why I only looked at Ariya and didn't turn around.

“When did you hear about it?”

Ariya bowed her head. That angle was also 45 degrees.

“A short while ago. Miss Zia had told me that ‘You especially mustn’t disregard Sir Yujin’, that the mercy that was shown to me by Her Excellency the Earl came from you, Sir Yujin.”

I see.

Zia Batsand. My sword.

In any case---and she said that I was nosy.

“All right. You arrived just in time. We were also in the midst of needing help.”

“Whenever I’m free, I’d hang on to the wall and peek through the window, but you seemed to be in danger so I broke in without permission. If that wasn’t rude of me, then it’s a relief.”

I’ll pass on asking her what she was hanging on.

“How could it be rude? We were able to survive thanks to you.”

“Who were they? Why were you attacked?”

“That’s what I want to ask. Miss Sii, do you have a hunch on who they were?”

“No, none at all…….”

“Is that so. Then let’s put that aside for the moment. You said your name was Ariya, right? Stand properly.”

Ariya raised herself. With her athletic body and movements that were so precise that it almost felt mechanical, Ariya stepped forward and stood before me.

“Sit down.”

I sat down on Sii’s bed and pointed towards the chair. Ariya looked back and forth between me and the chair.

“I will end up looking down at you.”

“That’s fine.”

“It’s not fine for me.” Shortly after, Ariya added. **“If it’s an order, then I will listen.”**

Hm.

“It’s an order.”

“So it’s an order. Understood.”

Ariya sat down on the chair. I spoke.

“I’ll ask frankly, how far can you go and how much can you do?”

“Anything as long as it does not cross the border of severely hindering the things that are more precious than myself.”

Those were similar words to what I had said to Sii earlier.

.....

“What’s your opinion on Sii?”

Sii audibly flinched.

“I think that she’s weak and servile. I think that she’s pitiful and annoying. As she does not have wisdom nor does she have strength, I believe that there’s nothing about her that’s worth respecting. To be honest, she’s the type of person that I dislike the most.”

Sii gnashed her teeth. Ariya, who had been staring at me the entire time, then shifted her head slightly, moving her gaze towards where Sii was seated.

Her laser-like gaze---line of sight, the fact that it was making Sii shrivel up like a squid that was being grilled on a fire was something that I could tell even without turning around.

I raised my hand and stopped her.

“But, you can respect her, right?”

“Respect, is it?”

“Yeah.”

“If it’s an order, then I will comply.”

“It’s an order.”

It wasn’t a good solution, but we already had a mountain of things which we had to solve. Ariya let out a sigh.

“So, it’s an order. Understood. As long as that respect doesn’t involve doing masochistic deeds, then I will respect her.”

“I said that I don’t like stimulating things.”

“.....My apologies.”

Ariya became dispirited. Although it seemed like she wanted to say something, her face was telling me that she thought it would be impolite to say it.

I could guess what she was thinking.

“Rumors about my relationship with Sii have gone around a bit, haven’t they?”

I must have been on the mark since Ariya avoided my gaze. Even the act of dropping her line of sight was so exact that it was like she had measured it with a protractor…… Well, that’s beside the point, I should explain to her the things which should be explained.

“There are things that I had done intentionally, so I guess I should say that I reap what I sow. Nevertheless, I’m actually not a masochist nor am I a pervert.”

“But the rumor that you enjoy the smell of armpits.”

“I wanted to appall that girl named Mari.”

“There’s also the rumor that people had witnessed you treating Sii like a lady and saw you licking her foot on several different occasions.”

“Because Sii wished for it.”

“Yujin…….”

Sii, I don’t think this is the right time to be moved.

Ariya turned her head.

“By those words, does that mean that if I were to perhaps wish for the same thing as Sii, then you would oblige?”

Mm.

“As long as it isn’t too stimulating.”

“That’ll bother me!” Sii shouted. “Yujin, you remember what we talked about before, right!? You can’t do that to people other than me!”

The reason why she went out of her way to declare that in this world's language was most likely because she wanted to display her will to Ariya. Should I say that this possessiveness also made her resemble her half-sister? Although that small figure of hers pulling on her blanket as she shrunk back once Ariya glared at her didn't resemble her half-sister.

Ariya then turned back to me and spoke in a composed voice.

“I won't wish for it in the first place.” Shortly after, Ariya added. **“I have a lover.”**

She then spoke towards Sii.

“Also, Sii. You should stop as well.”

Sii's face quickly became flushed.

“W-What right do you have!?”

“I cannot allow you to make my savior do those sorts of things.”

“Uuk..... this is a problem between me and Yujin! This isn't related to you!” Sii cried out as she tossed her blanket aside and stuck her foot out. **“Yujin, lick!”**

Ariya's eyes narrowed.

“Sii, you.”

Although Sii cowered once more, she didn't back down this time. Similar to how she had proved it when she shielded me when I was being whipped by the Silver Lion Earl, Sii occasionally possessed the shining bravery to suppress her cowardice.

“Ariya, you stay right there and watch the sight of your savior servicing me!”

While saying such underhanded words with that shining bravery of

hers, Sii wiggled her toes which were wrapped in her white stockings. Ariya bit her bottom lip.

“Please do not lick it.”

Hm.

“H-Hmph, Ariya. Isn’t it laughable that you’re trying to order around Yujin, your savior?”

“Because I can’t watch idly as my savior gets humiliated like that.”

“O-Okay.Mm~~ Then Ariya, how about you do it instead?”

Sii uttered a mean line that went beyond even what I had expected of her. She must have been unable to endure Ariya’s glare since she was trembling, but she continued to keep her foot stuck out even as she shook.

“I-If you’re truly grateful towards Yujin, and if that’s why you don’t want to see your savior do something like that, then..... you can do it, right? Something as easy as licking my foot.”

“.....”

“I-It’s no use if you glare at me like that. Or, as expected, was repaying his kindness just all talk?”

“.....,,”

“R-Right, Ariya is a boorish maid who steals. I was framed, but you were actually caught while doing it. Even if your wealth was declining, you said that you were the daughter of a family of knights, so you went around doing everything while holding your head up high, but the sight of you trembling when you were actually tied down, I still

remember it. Mm~~ the thought that your house must have fallen because collapsing was all it could do, was what went through my mind.”

You really can't deceive your bloodline.

“I-I-If Yujin wasn't here, then there's no way that all four of your limbs would have been fine. Limbs? It's obvious that you would have lost your life. But if you're unable to do something like this for that precious savior of yours, then as I thought, Ariya, you're nothing but talk..... hik!”

Sii, who was saying lines that made it feel as if I were witnessing the birth of a rare type of charisma, became frightened. Ariya had stood up.

Ariya walked with big strides and lifted Sii up by the back of her neck.

“Kyaah!”

Although there was no change in Ariya's facial expression, the veins on the back of her hands had become twice as thick.

It soon became three times as thick.

“Kyaah! Aack! S-Sorry! I'm sorry! I was wrong, auh, it hurts! Ariya, stop it! Wrong, I believe that violence, violence is wrong! Stop this instant! Kyah!”

Sii, who ended up like a cat that was being held by the back of their neck, made a tearful face and flailed her arms. I---after leaving her like that for a bit---spoke.

“Stop it.”

Ariya let go of Sii as if she were setting her aside. The instant Sii fell on top of her bed, she immediately wrapped herself up in her blanket before rolling to the corner of the room. While glaring at Sii who had

become like a pupa and was trembling, Ariya opened and closed her fists. Each time the sound of bones cracking resonated, the blanket pupa which contained Sii within it twitched and trembled.

“I said to stop.”

Ariya let out a sigh.

“My apologies.”

Ariya bowed her head towards me. After making her sit down by gesturing towards the chair, I turned towards Sii.

“Miss Sii.”

“Uu…… it hurts…… it hurts.”

“Miss Sii.”

“Yujin…… I’m, injured. I was abused…… Mm~~ isn’t this too much? Yujin, Yujin, help me, Yujin…….”

“Miss Sii.” I continued after calling her name for the third time. “We’re currently in a state where we urgently require help. Our lives were also in danger just a second ago. Ariya appeared during that situation and saved us.”

Although I wanted to say ‘taunting and provoking her won’t help us’, I’ll probably hear something like ‘but she started it’ in response. Would it be better to just tell her ‘please endure it a bit’? Or should I just conclude it by saying ‘therefore, please do not fight’?

That’s not it.

“Do not forget our goal.”

Using a standard tactic, I was honest and told it to her straight.

“If you establish a goal, then you should be able to endure the process. If you’re able to endure the process, then you can carry it

out. Furthermore, you must be able to carry your goal out in order to be able to achieve the thing which you originally intended to do. Think about it. Was humiliating Ariya the thing which Miss Sii wanted to do?”

“.....No.”

“Miss Sii is aware that what you did just now wasn’t helpful, right?”

“Uu.....”

“If you’re aware, then what must you do?”

“.....Apologize.”

“If you understand, then please do so.”

The blanket pupa squirmed around for a bit before Sii pushed her head out. She was lowering her gaze with a red face.

“Mm~~..... Sorry, Yujin. I was thinking wrongly..... I’m sorry.”

“I’m not the one who should be receiving the apology.”

“.....” Sii’s mouth wriggled about. **“Sorry, Ariya.”**

Ariya raised an eyebrow. That angle was also a clean 36 degrees. Before it could return back to its original position, I spoke.

“Ariya. I’m grateful towards that intention of yours which wants to pay back my kindness. I’m also really thankful for when you saved us earlier. We’re alive thanks to you.”

However? No, but is better.

“But I’m currently helping Sii.”

Thus, helping me will also be helping Sii? No, the opposite should be better.

“Thus, helping Sii will also be helping me.”

I’m not sure whether you’re going to ask me why I’m helping Sii or not? No, let’s wait.

“.....Why, are you helping Sii?”

Once I paused for a moment, Ariya asked the question first.

I answered.

“The Silver Lion Earl asked me the same thing when I was going to help you.”

Ariya most likely predicted that I would give this sort of reply.

That’s why I decided to tell her something that she both didn’t predict and was also curious about.

“At the time, I answered that it was for my own sake.”

As expected, I was honest and told it to her straight.

“But, I don’t understand how saving my life, the life of a person who you’ve never met before would be beneficial to you.”

“I was desperate to stay alive at that time. Due to the incident that you had caused, the Silver Lion Earl was in an unstable state as well. In order to fix that no matter what, I had appealed to her so that she would spare your life. I succeeded. The Silver Lion Earl accepted my request, forgave you, and was somewhat able to regain her mental stability.”

“.....”

“The fact that I was able to come out of the basement was most likely by the narrowest of margins. If I didn’t save you, if the Silver Lion Earl’s mental state was a bit more unstable,

then it would have probably been impossible.”

“Are you saying that by saving me, you were also saved?”

“Yup. Just now, I was able to receive your help, wasn’t I?”

I spoke adamantly and added.

“There’s a saying in my world that says that saving the person in front of you is the same thing as saving yourself when you’re under a state of crisis in the future. Although it’s an old-fashioned saying, I believe that there’s a reason that it’s old-fashioned.”

Ariya’s line of sight shook.

I continued.

“Under that same logic, the fact that I’m helping Sii is also an extension of helping myself. Do you think you can help her while keeping in mind that you’ll also be helping me?”

“....., Honestly, I didn’t really understand what you meant earlier. Regardless, I properly understood what you’re saying now.”

Aria got down on one knee once more and bowed her head.

“I, Ariya Orgit, shall help you who had saved me.”

Ariya Orgit overlapped both of her hands, making the six finger shape, and stretched her arms out.

“.....I’ll, also help Yujin.”

Sii, who had hesitantly rolled over here, sat down on the bed and stretched her hand towards me.

Two hands were being extended towards me from two different angles. It’s most likely premature to connect these two hands together

right now. I, as the person who was in between the two, grabbed both of their hands. As if that were a signal, Ariya raised her head and Sii lowered hers. Their eyes met. [\[6\]](#)

I then understood the feeling a lightbulb would have when they've been serially connected.

“I’ll be in your care, Sii.”

Ariya spoke while strengthening her grip like a hawk that was crushing its prey with its talons.

“I’ll be the one who’ll be in your care, Ariya.”

Sii spoke while putting strength into her hand like a lion that was chewing on its game.

I, who was stuck in between them, mm, lights were flashing before my eyes.

For the time being, it seems things were going to be more difficult than before.

Footnotes

1. [\[↑\] Example video](#)
2. [\[↑\]](#) 'Bothersome, the Beginning' is supposed to read like some movie title.
3. [\[↑\]](#) Reference to Volume 1 Chapter 5, Mental Armor.
4. [\[↑\]](#) 'Water dragon' and the word 'Confinement' that's used here are pronounced the same in Korean. The difference is the Chinese letters.
5. [\[↑\]](#) Chuuni is the shortened form of Chuunibyou. Ambiguous and Chuuni sound almost the same in Korean. [tvtropes](#)
6. [\[↑\]](#) Bed>Chair>Floor. That's the height of things



You must know in order to fight. If you do not know, then you must think. If you cannot think, then you must feel. If you cannot feel, then you have no other choice but to hope that you have good luck. However, something like luck doesn't exist, and even if it did, that luck won't take your side. If you have no other choice but to hope for a lucky occurrence, then you can only depend on mercy.

There's at least mercy. If it's staying alive, then that can be managed. If I use Korea as an example, then out of the approximately fifty million citizens, the majority of them all either possess the money or a method to take care of their meals for the day. They're able to survive. Mercifully, ironically.

Atrociously.

The instant you anticipate something more than 'continue to live' from 'staying alive' is when the struggle begins. Life becomes hard, the road turns fierce, and the world becomes a battleground. Like so, you return to the premise of 'you must know in order to fight'. The root of dignity is within Hell.



The process of Ariya joining us was actually strenuous. The following day, she abruptly asked me this.

“How should I address you?”

“Just call me Yujin.”

“I cannot carelessly say the name of my savior.”

“Then add a Mr. at the front.”

“That sounds disrespectful.”

“Then add a Sir at the front.”

“That sounds insincere.”

Mm.

“Just tell me what you want to call me by.”

“As much as I am in your debt, I believe that it’d only be right to address you as Fair Grace(恩公).”

“Then do so.”

Although I had said that, Ariya merely stared at me.

I realized what the problem was.

“Call me Fair Grace.”

I said that, but Ariya kept staring right at me.

I---for real this time---realized what the problem was.

“Refer to me as Fair Grace. That’s an order.”

Ariya lowered her head as if she were sheathing a blade.

“Yes, Fair Grace.”

If it was this much, then it might not be that large of a problem. If this conversation didn’t happen in the center of the dining room, while in front of the watchful eyes of all the other maids, that is. The fact that we’re eating while within the crevice of where girls whisper among one another was something that I was accustomed to and Ariya herself didn’t seem as if she were concerned about it at all, however, it seems Sii felt as if she had fallen into a pit filled with centipedes.

The moment there were fewer people, Sii violently pointed out Ariya’s absence of awareness.

“Ariya! Just what were you doing!? Hm?I-I, mean..... uhm, mm~~ p-people were all..... watching..... something like that is a bit..... wouldn't it be bad..... is what I thought......”

The reason why Sii's voice became quieter as she continued to speak was because she had shrunk back once she received Ariya's glare. Ariya spoke coldly.

“Please do not assume that I am like you, Sii. I didn't do that thoughtlessly. The matter regarding appellation was something that we were going to have to deal with one day anyway. Furthermore, I do not wish to requite Fair Grace's kindness while also being wary of watchful eyes. Thus, since the fact that I hold Fair Grace in respect is something that will one day be revealed anyway, I thought that it would be better to take care of it sooner, so that is why I had done that.”

“B-but, even so..... Mm.....,, that doesn't make sense! If you really did want to do that, then you should have told Yujin first! There would have been no reason for you to say it so publicly like that! It's just that you have a pathetic sense of awareness! You lump of muscle!”

The reason why Sii's voice became louder as she continued to speak was because she had hidden behind me. Ariya looked at Sii, who was boldly shouting while only sticking her head out from behind me, as if she were pathetic before speaking.

“Do as you wish. At any rate, your words hold no meaning to me.”

“Then what will Yujin say? Yujin, what do you think!? You're obviously on my side, right!? Tell her that she was a bother!”

I didn't repeat the companionship campaign that I had done for the two of them before.

“Ariya, you have a point. Moreover, I’m also grateful towards that open declaration that you’ll help me regardless of what everyone else thinks.”

“Yes, Fair Grace.”

“But it was a bit rash. Next time, tell me beforehand.”

“.....Is that an order?”

“Yeah.”

“Understood.”

Ariya bowed her head.

If you look at it from this angle, then you can’t really say that Ariya had caused any problems. Ariya didn’t act without thinking and if I point something out, then she’d listen obediently. If Sii didn’t nitpick at things, then the majority of the troubles that had occurred were things that couldn’t be considered problems in the first place.

The thing that happened after the dining room incident was an example of that.

“Ariya, what are you carrying?”

“My baggage.”

Ariya spoke after putting down the duffel bag she was carrying. Sii furrowed her brow.

“Yeah. I have eyes as well. What I want to know is why you’re putting that down here.”

We were in Sii’s room.

“The same reason as to why you left the sick room and why you’ve been following Fair Grace around even though you’re still unable to do anything because of your arm. It is

unknown whether there will be another assault or not so I cannot leave Fair Grace by himself.”

It seems a cat got Sii’s tongue. If you read into Ariya’s words a bit, then you would know that I’ve been constantly taking Sii along with me now because of the same reason. I couldn’t leave her by herself.

“Additionally, it’s also in order to keep watch so I can prevent you from making Fair Grace do something like that again.”

I was in the middle of massaging Sii’s thighs. Sii was about to snort but she became frightened by Ariya’s gaze, so she ended up pulling her legs back. I nearly broke my neck thanks to that, but, well, in any case, I spoke.

“Is it fine for you to live here?”

“I received Miss Sophna’s approval.”

“Ah, did she come out of her room?”

“No, she is still in her lab. Since she still has her meals, whenever we have business with Miss Sophna, we communicate with her by writing a memo, putting it into her food basket, and delivering it to her. We receive an answer when we go to retrieve the empty food basket.”

“A genuine hikikomori-style conversation method. Hm…… well, whatever.” I thought for a moment. **“Then I guess that means there won’t be any problems if you live he---eub.”**

My words were cut off. Sii had drawn her legs back and choked me with them.

“How could there be no problems!? This is my room!”

“I guess, it would, be narrow.”

“That’s not the issue!” Sii shouted and then shifted into talking in Korean. “Yujin, think. This room is small. Moreover, you won’t be able to service me anymore. Something like that, Yujin the masochist, wouldn’t want that, right?”

“Miss Sii, you claimed that that wasn’t the issue but not only was this room being small the very first thing you mentioned but if I really were a masochist, then have you not considered that I would actually enjoy someone watching me while I serviced you? Of course, since I’m not a masochist, all speculation regarding this is pointless.”

“Well, Yujin will probably be delighted, but if that girl physically prevents that from happening, then I can’t do anything about it! I’m, weak.”

“I believe that Sii’s strength is on the strong side.”

“Yeah, that’s right! But that isn’t the issue. That girl has technique. With that technique, she supplements her strength that’s weaker than mine…… No, this isn’t the issue either! I’m, alone!”

“You aren’t alone.”

I spoke.

“I’m here.”

Sii looked down at me for a moment. Her face became dyed in a scarlet color like a field that had caught on fire. The girl, whose body became so red that even her legs which were wrapped around my neck felt hot, averted her gaze away from me.

“Really, Yujin occasionally says some incredibly cute things sometimes.”

While Sii and I were having this conversation, Ariya had been tossing Sii’s stuff into the hallway. Sii realized this a second late and cried out in a panic.

“What are you doing!?”

“Cleaning.” Ariya, who had tossed out roughly everything, walked over to us. **“Sii, Fair Grace. I have to move the bed as well, please get up.”**

I did as I was told. Sii sat herself down with her legs crossed, making it appear as if she didn't intend to ever move from her spot, but she immediately became frightened by Ariya's gaze and wrapped herself in her blanket, turning herself into a pupa again. In any case, she still didn't move away from her bed.

“I won't move! Just where exactly does it need to be cleaned?”

“How long has it been since you washed your bed sheet?”

The blanket pupa twitched.

“The air is stuffy as well. Have you been airing your room properly? This room doesn't have windows. It's because you're a girl that a smell that's still barely tolerable is going around.”

The blanket pupa squirmed and twitched.

“Just how much hair is on the flo---.”

Ariya stopped mid-sentence. The blanket pupa had wriggled and crawled its way down from the bed. Ariya sighed and turned towards me.

“Fair Grace as well. Wouldn't it have been better if you had cleaned this room while Sii was still in the sick room? I heard that starting from cleaning, you specialize in every type of housework.”

“It'd be rude to arbitrarily clean a girl's room, right?”

It seems a cat got Ariya's tongue this time. Sii tilted her head.

“Yujin, you really do occasionally say some sane but also cute things sometimes.”

“Although it's unpleasant to agree with you, it can't be helped. However, since I will be living here, I shall play my role as a rude person.”

Ariya lifted up the bed and set it down outside. After that, she brought in a bunch of cleaning utensils and started to dust and wipe the entire room. I helped out as well. Sii, who was assisting with her uninjured arm, was sulking the entire time, but after she saw the things Ariya took out of her duffel bag, she brightened up.

“A new sheet and blanket!”

“Then is it fine to live together now?”

Sii nibbled on her lips before quickly turning away.

“Uu…… because I saw Yujin's face!”

No matter how you looked at it, it was because she saw the new sheet and blanket.

Ariya shrugged her shoulders and wrapped the new sheet around the mattress. Sii hesitantly helped out with that.

Like how you could tell from this situation, Ariya was more considerate than I had expected. Whenever a fight occurs between the two of them, Sii was usually to blame. Sii was also ill-natured, but since she wasn't wicked to the point of being untouchable, she was familiarizing herself with how to take care of herself.

Like so, the three of us ended up living together. A heart-pounding life living together with two girls in a single room which was barely several square meters wide---Of course, something like that didn't happen.

“I see that Fair Grace is celibate.”

“Obviously. Yujin is satisfying all of his twisted sexual desires while servicing me.”

That wasn't the case.

Like I said, I believed that I wouldn't get excited for anyone other than Minhee.

Except, in the moment my situation feels as if the number of girls living with me will increase to three, I feel like my heart will pound for an entirely different reason.

“Ariya.”

“Yes, Fair Grace.”

“There's a person who's been peeking at this room ever since you moved here.”

To be exact, it was Alshi. The other martial artist type maid who was together with me at the laundry drying area. Ariya's lover, and.....

Ariya pressed her hand against her forehead.

“I'll send her back.”

“No. How about living together with her as well?”

If Ariya was slightly startled by my response, then Sii was incredibly perplexed.

“Yujin! Just how many people do you plan to bring to my room!?”

“It will be narrow, but I believe that increasing the number of our companions is something that should be welcomed. I've said it before, but the more colleagues we have, the more options that'll be available to us.”

Since this was something that I had to tell Ariya as well, I spoke in this world's language. Sii became red and shouted.

“Even so! It’s not like my room is some sort of salon! If only the number of girls increases in this small space, then that’s a bit…… even if Yujin has a girl in Korea…… No, more so because of that!”

Ariya became flustered, something which rarely happened, and waved her hand.

“That will be difficult.”

“Because the room is small? Or because you don’t want to place the girl, whom you cherish so much, near the girl you dislike?”

“Both are correct.” Ariya ignored Sii’s rising eyebrows. **“Alshi is, how should I say it…… she is contemplating about something right now.”**

Contemplating about something, is it?

There was one thing that came to mind.

“Furthermore, I may lose my composure. I don’t live a celibate life like Fair Grace, after all.”

For this girl, who’d even sleep while also maintaining a perfect body angle, to say something like that, it felt somewhat ironic.

“Although I don’t think that I live a celibate life, is that really a reason?”

“It is. If I were to sleep together with Alshi in a room that’s as small as this, then I will most likely be unable to control myself.”

It became an explanation that had an excessively vivid taste. Sii

furrowed her brow.

“Really, I don’t understand. Why do people of the same gender……? You can’t even have a child.”

“I do not intend to make you understand. In any case, I’m saying that it’ll be troubling for me. Solely this, even if Fair Grace were to command me, this is something that’ll be hard for me to obey.”

Ariya drew a line as if she didn’t want to say anything more. Even I had no desire to cross that line.

At the very least, not right now.

Fortunately, like this incident, all of the chaos which had occurred after Ariya joined us were all things that could be endured. Once our situation had been decently organized, I started to make my move.



“This is what I was talking about before.”

I lifted up a USB. Sii curved her body slightly.

“Yujin, as I thought, isn’t this dangerous?”

“It’s more dangerous to not do anything. We were attacked for some unknown reason, you know? We were, fortunately, able to survive thanks to Ariya.” I turned towards that very savior of ours. **“If we weren’t saved, then something terrible would have happened.”**

Sii groaned.

“That’s true, but, but…… what I mean is, wouldn’t it be fine to just leave it to Her Excellency the Earl? You gave her

the report, didn't you? The guards should be moving."

"The guards can't be trusted."

I spoke sternly.

"The civilization level of this world is mediocre. Moreover, even when Miss Sii was framed, they did nothing and allowed the Earl to execute her unlawful punishment."

"Yujin....."

Sii looked up at me with her arms gathered in front of her chest. However, Ariya tilted her head.

"Fair Grace, are you not underestimating them a bit too much? The guards of the Water Dragon City^[1] are actually more competent than what you might think."

"Mm~~ Certainly, they're competent enough to capture a certain someone who was trying to steal the jewelry of Her Excellency's mother in the middle of the night."

"Sii, spasmodically going into a fit every time someone gives an opinion that's the opposite of Fair Grace's own opinion will only make you a nuisance to him. Since you won't understand even if I tell you this, I'll borrow that head of yours for a second."

"Hugyaaaah!"

"Continuing on from where I left off, Fair Grace. There is a competent person within the guards. As a believer of the God of Equality, Gainu Warmon, there's a person who has solved several dozen cases. I also said this back when you first told me the summary of your plan, but since that individual is there, I'm unable to agree with this method."

Ariya stated and gestured at the USB in my hand with her

chin. She didn't point at it with her hand because she was pressing both of her fists into Sii's temple. I stopped her by grabbing onto both of her wrists before speaking.

“Let me get this straight then. The guards of the Water Dragon City are more competent than what I think of them and the reason for that is because they have a single genius. The reason why you're telling me this is because if this is perhaps discovered by the guards, then you're worried that I'll be in trouble.”

“One way or another, I can get away with feigning ignorance and I don't really care about what happens to Sii, but there is still a debt that I have to repay, Fair Grace.”

“I'm really grateful for your concern, but the impression other people have of me is already at the lowest. Not only am I an otherworlder, but I'm also the Earl's toy. I went head on against the maid who leads the largest faction among the maids. I also chose to stand on Sii's side. Even if one or two more things are added to this list, if I were to say it in this world's terms, then it's adding one to twelve. That's why you don't have to worry. Honestly speaking,”

I fixed the position of my glasses and continued.

“I'm, already used to this type of feeling and it's simple to handle.”

Sii and Ariya glanced at one another. I spoke while connecting my iPad to the USB.

“I'm going to play it.”

I then took out a single wireless earphone meant for only one ear and a single pair of earphones which were connected together by a cable. I passed the two of them the connected earphones, handing them one earphone each.

“Wait, Yujin! I want to listen together with Yujin!”

“My apologies, Fair Grace, but sitting side by side with Sii and sharing these with her is physiologically difficult for me. If it’s an order, then I will listen.”

I ignored their complaints and pressed the play button. Although they looked displeased, they shared the earphones in the end.

We then watched the recorded video that had begun to play on the tablet screen.

〈Aah, really. How much longer do we have to work like this? Seri, don’t you think so as well?〉

〈Yes, but this is still on the easy side right now…… We have prominent guests scheduled to arrive one after another next month and the month after.〉

〈The esteemed daughter of the Cat Earl and the prince of the Orange Hawk were going to come, right……? Really, I’m grateful that Mari and that guy…… Yujin are handling the work so well.〉

〈Woof! Don’t compliment that guy!〉

〈Kina, why do you dislike that guy so much? He honestly works well, doesn’t he?〉

〈Woof……. That guy came from another world, didn’t he? That’s why…….〉

It was a hidden camera. This was the certain something that I had been setting up while I was also getting accustomed to my daily life here. I had installed all of the electronics, which I had brought back from my last trip to Korea, throughout the castle. I had collected today’s data earlier and was going through them now. Ariya looked as if

she were in awe.

“The magic of Fair Grace’s world…… did you say this was called a hidden camera? I heard the explanation, but it’s surprising.”

“This is common in my world.”

“Even so, this is still amazing, Fair Grace. Except, the thing I’m still unable to understand is how exactly watching the maids getting changed is related to our investigation regarding the assailants.”

I adjusted my glasses.

“Collecting information. Since there are pieces of information which can only be gathered like this.”

“Is that the case?”

“Yup. Now if you’ll excuse me, I’m busy renewing the character sheets and the relationship charts.”

Although Ariya looked as if she were still confused, she nodded anyway. Sii was already staring at the screen as if her eyes had been absorbed into it. For starters, the dressing room.

〈I’m tired~! This is all Miss Sophna’s fault! Ever since she shut herself in…….〉

〈Shh! What are you going to do if someone hears you!? You’ll become bunny beef, you know!〉

〈Uuuuuuu…….〉

The reception room.

〈Hey, do I really have to clean the basement? I mean, I did lose the Twelve Fingers match, but……. What I mean is, Sii

left the sick room today, didn't she? We could also make that Yujin person do it.....>

<Losers~ can't complain~.>

<Either resent Sii or resent yourself for being unable to work as well as Yujin does. Hurry up and go down to clean.>

<Jeez.....>

Dining room.

<Doesn't it seem like the food has become tastier lately?>

<Raya must be working harder!>

<No, rather than that, it's just because Yujin has been taking charge of the cooking more frequently lately.....>

<Aresa, you're really ruthless towards Raya.>

<It's regrettable for me too, but the truth is the truth.....>

<.....I'm asking just to be sure, but are you two actually dating?>

And.

“Fair Grace, do we really have to watch places like this as well?”

Ariya voiced her disapproval once more. Sii hesitantly raised her head for the first time since the hidden videos had started to play and looked at me.

“Uhm, Yujin. I don't want to agree with Ariya, but this location, uh, it's the bathroom, isn't it? It's things like this that make you seem like a complete pervert.”

I pushed my glasses up.

“The bathroom is a place where important things are said a lot. It’s an area where you end up relaxing both mentally and physically. Back in my world, there was a time where a real estate millionaire was immediately arrested after having said something scandalous while in their own bathroom.”

“Mm~~ yeah. Yujin probably knows more about theoretical stuff. But Yujin, think about it. Yujin is sharing earphones with two other girls right now. You’re also watching secretly shot videos of the bathroom. This kind of man, what would Yujin call them?”

A pervert.

“In any case, it seems Mari has arrived.”

“Ah! Yujin, shh! I can’t miss this! Fufu, ufufu, ufufufufufu…… For someone who goes around with her head held up high so much, I’ll make sure to clearly watch what sort of crude appearance you’re going to display!”

This girl was also a pervert, so she had no sense of shame. Even though Ariya didn’t know Korean, it seems she must have grasped the situation through just the intonations since she was looking at Sii as if she were pathetic.

“My apologies, Fair Grace, but as I thought, this is the only venture which I do not think that I can accompany you on. Unless you order me to, then it cannot be helped.”

“If you’re going to back out now, then give me the other earphone! Make sure to close your eyes, too!”

“Let go. Fair Grace hasn’t given me an answer yet, has he? I do not wish to do it, but if it’s Fair Grace’s command, then I will have to do it in order to pay back his kindness. If it’s an order, that is. To an extent.”

Ariya uttered and looked at me with eyes that appeared as

if they were hoping for something.

In other words, this girl was also a pervert.

“It’s an order.”

“Then it truly cannot be helped.”

Ariya pushed the earphone firmly into her ear. Shortly after, the concentrating while also audibly gulping down her saliva pervert and the silently concentrating pervert both displayed a disappointed expression. Though the extent of their respective disappointment was different.

“Mm~~ she isn’t doing anything.”

“It seems she came here to just rest.”

As they stated, the Mari in the video was just sitting back on the toilet seat with her eyes closed.

“Skipping out on her work like this, she really is the worst. Even though she foams at the mouth whenever I rest for even a tiny bit.”

“She deserves to rest like this. It’s true that Mari works a lot, isn’t it?”

“Yujin works more!”

“Yes, and the reason why Fair Grace is working that much is because he’s doing your work in your stead.”

“Uu……. I know that even if you don’t tell me. I’m trying to quickly get better…….”

“It is indeed an issue that cannot be resolved with just one’s own willpower.”

The two perverts’ conversation had strangely become

cordial. It was probably something similar to an accomplice mentality that came from watching unauthorized videos together.

Cut.

“Ah, Raya appeared next.”

“She’s holding snacks.”

〈Uuu, why is it that when I make it, it doesn’t come out like that guy’s……?〉

Cut.

“It’s Miss Ashya. She’s just smoking. I guess she’s here to skip out on work like Mari. Albeit, different from Mari, she’s someone who normally doesn’t work anyway.”

“She’s been discouraged ever since Miss Sophna had shut herself in.”

“Yeah. She’s the leader of the established faction. In other words, she’s most likely one of the four people who framed me…….”

Cut.

“It’s Kina. I’ve always been curious as to how she sits on the toilet with that height of hers, aha, she enters her unsheathed state and---.”

Cut.

“Different from the docile impression Seri gives, she’s surprisingly---.”

Cut.

Time flowed by like that for a while. Once we reached near

the end of the video, Sii let out a satisfied sigh. (I'm also uncertain as to how it's possible for her to contradict herself like that.) "Mm~~ Nothing special today as well."

"That seems to be the case. I had no other choice but to watch since it was Fair Grace's order, so it was twice as difficult for me to....."

"Shh."

I shut both of their mouths. In the video, someone had opened the door to the bathroom and entered. Ariya opened her eyes wide.

The one who had entered the bathroom was Ariya's lover, Alshi. She was being displayed on the screen.



Ariya placed her hand on top of the iPad.

"All right. It seems that's it."

"What are you doing!?"

Sii grabbed onto the wrist of that hand. Ariya turned her wrist and twisted her body, immediately putting Sii into a subduing hold.

"Gyaack!"

"Ariya, keep it moderate." I spoke. "Make sure that you especially don't touch her other arm."

"I absolutely will not touch that arm, Fair Grace. However, we must not watch any further than this. This is not right."

Her attitude was firm enough to remind me of the justice of

the Supreme Court. Sii complained.

“You’re acting differently compared to the pervert who was enjoying herself while using orders as a pretext a second ago.”

“There is still the favor which I must repay Fair Grace, so I can perform quite the amount of tasks even if they violate laws or go against my own conscience. However, I cannot carry out an order that can cause harm to Alshi.”

“Harm!? What sort of harm would Alshi receive!? It’s not like she’s going to corrode just because we look at her a bit!”

Sii gave a cliché excuse that befits a peeker.

“Would we not be invading Alshi’s privacy?”

Really, those were words that I didn’t expect to hear from the pervert who was pleasantly watching the video while using my orders as an excuse a second ago.

“Who’s going to judge that so-called invasion? Alshi doesn’t know anything, right? Can there be something like an invasion of privacy or whatever when the opposition has no idea?”

The conversation became a high-level talk questioning whether that action could be predicated as wicked or not if the person directly involved had not received any mental harm due to the fact that they didn’t know.

“Don’t the sky, the earth, and we know?”

The topic leaped up to the level of Oriental philosophy.

“Then all we have to do is keep our mouths shut. Like we did for everyone else who was recorded until now.”

It was around the time when their conversation resembled something that the archangels of the Angiris Council would talk about while gazing down at the sacred grounds.

〈……Just how did it, end up like this.〉

Ariya flinched. It was Alshi's voice. She had let the video play for too long. However, instead of seeing a scene that would happen as a matter of course in the bathroom, the sight of Alshi crouching down while placing her hand against her forehead was being displayed.

〈Uu…….〉

She was being tormented by something. Although you didn't really need to have a special relationship with another person in order to sympathize with them, it tended to help. Ariya muttered while looking into the screen.

“Alshi.”

Using this moment when the strength in Ariya's shoulders had disappeared, Sii shook off Ariya's grip and stood up. Thankfully, contrary to my concern, Sii didn't make any sarcastic remarks towards Ariya who was in agony because of her lover's pain.

“Mm……,” Sii spoke up in a cautious tone. “Ariya, why is Alshi like that? Did something happen?”

Before Ariya could say anything in response, a change had occurred in the video. Someone had opened the door to the stall that Alshi was in and entered.

A small,

a really small girl.

Drooping dog ears that appeared like cotton battings which

had been used for a long period of time. A short height that didn't even reach 1 meter tall. She was a Saber-Fang like Kina. Her unkempt hair and projecting teeth made her give off a tomboyish vibe and the fact that the buttons on the uniform which was wrapped around her small body were misaligned gave me the impression that she was clumsy.

“It's Miss Roroa…… the guard. But why is she in the place where Alshi…….”

Sii stopped mid-sentence and closed her mouth. The Saber-Fang guard known as Roroa had all of a sudden jumped into Alshi's embrace.

“Eck.”

Sii became perplexed and looked back and forth between the iPad and Ariya. Although Ariya's face was void of emotions, the veins on the back of her hand were becoming thicker.

Within the video, Alshi and Roroa were hugging and rubbing up against one another. We couldn't hear their conversation that well since they were both whispering. Soon after that, as if the battery had died, the video was cut off without any warning.

Sii hesitantly turned to look at Ariya.

“Uhm…… Ariya, that just now…….”

“Don't say anything.”

Ariya uttered. That response made Sii fly into a temper instead.

“What do you mean by don't say anything!? This, no matter how you look at it, it's cheating, isn't it?!”

“Alshi wouldn’t do something like that.”

“That’s just what you think! But putting aside your delusions! This is clearly cheating! Even if you overlook the fact that they’re both girls, for it to even be different races…… and with that Miss Roroa!”

“That’s a rather funny statement, Sii. If you consider the fact that your mother was half-marble, that is.”

“D-Don’t bring my mother into this!”

“Then you shouldn’t drag my lover into this!”

The instant Ariya shouted that while displaying an agitation which she rarely ever showed, a clicking sound resonated and the door had opened.

The light from a lamp and the setting sun mixed together, making a blood-like scarlet afterglow flow into the room. I grabbed the iPad at the same time as both Sii and Ariya had stopped and turned to look at the door. Whoever the person was, they must have felt the bustling atmosphere, as their small feet had stopped themselves from entering the room.

“Wan…… are you busy right now?”

A small,

a really small girl.

A Saber-Fang who was wearing the uniform of the Silver Guards---the girl who was being held in Alshi’s embrace in the video we were watching a second ago, Roroa was looking at us with a puzzled face.



I'll organize the current situation.

First, we were gathering information from the hidden cameras.

Second, the person who was being displayed in those videos a moment ago had visited this room without notice.

Organizing complete. This was something that happened often during the 8 Years' War. While skillfully flipping the iPad over and turning it off, I spoke.

“Hi. I'm Yujin. This here is…….”

“Wan! Miss Sii Mikatni and Miss Ariya Orgit. I am aware, wan.”

While responding with a pronunciation that let other people know she had a short tongue, Roroa giggled. She then spread her drooping dog ears out widely and looked at me.

“I know you as well, wan. Sir Yujin! The otherworlder who was summoned by Her Excellency the Earl! I heard about you from Abria, wan.”

Abria Mikatni. Sii's foster-sister.

“Are you friends?”

“Yes. Furthermore, the House of Mikatni produces the arms for the Silver Lion Guards, wan. If they were also skilled at needlework, then they would have even produced our uniforms, but it's quite regrettable. Isn't that so, wan, Miss Sii?”

Sii laughed evasively. Roroa smiled widely before bowing her head towards me.

“Oh right. Sir Yujin, I'd like to also apologize to you, wan. My family has been inconveniencing you.”

“Kina?”

“Yes. That girl’s personality has always been like that of a poison-barbed porcupine…….”

“It’s fine. She’s adorable.”

“Wan! If that’s the case, then it’s a relief, wan!”

Roroo raised her ears up and grinned brightly. I scooted over to the side and presented her a place to sit on the mattress.

“Don’t just stand there and have a seat. I apologize for the narrow space.”

“Wan! It’s okay, it’s okay. As you can see, wan, I’m small!”

Roroo dived onto the mattress. She was about to turn around and sit down, but she paused and swung her small hands and legs around.

“Hoeeee! I-It’s incredibly soft, smooth, and also gives off a good fragrance!? Did you perhaps……?”

“Yeah. It hasn’t been long since we brought in new sheets.”

“Ho-ho, I see-I see. Hmhm, hmm, huu, hua…… this was clearly washed with the water from the 2nd-floor basement of the Central Tower and dried with the winter sunlight…… this clean fragrance that makes one feel like they’re becoming healthier…… but the scent coming up from the mattress underneath the sheet…… because this fragrance that smells like trampled grass with a couple of drops of milk is emphasized…… it’s not monotonous.”

“W-What do you mean by trampled grass with a couple of drops of milk!”

Sii became red and complained. Roroa's ears pricked upwards for a moment before she modestly gathered her hands together on top of her lap and sat down.

“Fueh…… I’m sorry, wan. I unconsciously became absorbed, wan. It’s just that my nose is good…….”

“N-N-No, the important thing is……. For it to have that scent…….”

“To be exact, it smells like it’s also been sealed for two days, wan. Fuah…… ah, I want to smell it again, wan.”

“Uu…….”

Sii turned her shoulders about with an embarrassed expression on her face. It’s not that bad of a smell so she doesn’t have to be that worried about it.

“Would you like a drink?”

“Wan, is that okay? I’d feel sorry if I make you go all the way to the dining room…….”

“It’s fine. There’s one here.”

I handed her a bottle. After gulping down a mouthful, Roroa’s eyes sparkled.

“Waan! Lipton Ice Tea! It’s been so long, wan!”

Mm?

“You know about this drink?”

“Yes~ There was a time when Ahyeon had given me one. Wan! I didn’t think I’d be able to drink this again! Hoeeh, what a lucky day!”

The dog-eared girl sucked on the bottle while grabbing onto

it with both of her hands. I waited for her to finish drinking before speaking.

“So what brings a guard here all of a sudden?”

“To hear from the witness, wan. I heard that you were assaulted yesterday, wan.”

I had gone into the main topic without warning, but it seems she was capable of responding immediately.

“You came now? Personally?”

“Yes. Normally, we were supposed to have come the instant the order was given, but during this time, even us guards are busy with all sorts of things……. I was just barely able to, wan, make some spare time now. I didn’t want to make you guys come and go since it’s so late, so I came personally. If you’re not busy, can I ask a few questions, wan?”

Not only did she perfectly grasp the real intention hidden behind my incoherent question, but she explained her own circumstances during that process and also went a step further and advanced the conversation. Her tomboyish first impression, it was completely different compared to the way she spoke. There’s no doubt that the ‘competent person among the guards’ was this girl.

“It’s almost time for me to go give my routine report to the Earl.”

“It won’t take long.”

“Well, if you say so.”

“Yeap^[2]. then please wait a moment, wan.”

Roroa sprayed a green light into the air.

At first, it looked similar to the liquid particles that would be sprayed out of a spray bottle. It wasn't long before those particles gathered together and formed lines, shapes, and figures. A vivid hologram phenomenon was now floating in the center of this dark room. I recognized the shape to be a type of list.

“Magic?”

“It's a sacred blessing. The majority of us ‘devotees of the Giant Molars’ organize our data like this. Now then…… Sir Yujin?”

“You can just call me Yujin.”

“Okay, Yujin. Wan. Can you give me an explanation of the situation during the time when you were attacked, wan?”

I did so. It was 2 people wearing maid uniforms, they opened a door that was locked and entered the room, they were equipped with weird masks and eccentric daggers, although I tried to fight against them, it was impossible for me, we were able to stay safe thanks to Ariya's appearance. Roroa, who was organizing the information by moving her small finger around and touching the hologram floating in the air, flapped her ears.

“Sii. Ariya. How about you two? Out of all the information that was mentioned, wan, is there anything that's wrong or needs to be fixed?”

“No, there's nothing.”

“…….”

Sii replied cautiously while Ariya just glared at Roroa. Roroa pricked up one ear and turned to look at Ariya.

“Ariya, is there something you wish to say, wan?”

Ariya didn't respond. Silence.

Before the awkward silence could last any longer, I spoke.

"This is all we can tell you. What do you think?"

If this were Korea, then they wouldn't tell the victim about the investigation, but this was another world.

"They're probably someone from the outside or the inside, wan. This is obvious. If you consider the fact that they were able to accurately pinpoint Miss Sii's sick room, the fact that they were wearing maid uniforms, and the fact that they didn't encounter anyone while going to and escaping from the room, then there's a high possibility that it's the latter. Furthermore, the fact that they invaded this castle and caused a commotion means that they either don't know their place or they're that skilled, wan. Since they were fought off by Miss Ariya, there's a high chance that it's the former. Therefore, if I were to organize the information that I have now, then."

Roroa pressed a button on the hologram. A twelve finger symbol spun around for a moment before soon displaying the result screen.

"Either a fairly insane insider who's not afraid of Her Excellency the Earl or an outsider who's standing in a position that's able to obtain information from that sort of insider. Although they're thorough during the planning phase, they're the type of person to slack when it comes to actually carrying out their plan. This is about 7 out of 12."

Certainly, as Ariya had said, it seems I was underestimating the guards of this world--- and the level of this civilization.

"That's logical. I thought that you would use an investigation method that was a bit more magical."

Roroo revealed her molars as she laughed.

“Wan! I heard that they do that in places like the House of the Cat Earl, wan. But we only have a few number of mages here and this is the only sacred blessing that I can use. No matter who the person is and where they are, wan, they’ll end up doing the best they can with whatever resources they have. Well, the most magical and certain method would be to retrieve something like the hair of the mask maids, deliver it to Her Excellency the Earl, and request for her to summon them, but…….”

“I told the Earl before when I gave her my initial report, but there was nothing.”

“Yes. Masks that covered their entire heads. Long gloves. It means that they were prepared for Her Excellency’s ability. That’s why I said that they were thorough when it came to the planning phase.”

Roroo had a concerned look on her face, showing that she was worried whether we’d take her words as her blaming us, the victims, or not. I shrugged my shoulders to assure her that that wasn’t the case.

“And the other 5 out of 12?”

“Wan! Starting from the possibility that you had lied to the possibility that they were assassins who’re able to use invisibility magic, since these things can’t be placed within the Twelve Fingers, there’s no point in quibbling over them, wan.”

“We didn’t lie!”

Sii shouted. Roroo folded her ears.

“Waan. Of course, I’m aware. I meant that there will be too many things to think about if we were to even consider

those kinds of preposterous possibilities. That's why, while putting nitpicks about those kinds of things aside, I intend to plan out an investigation while placing the highest possibility that was mentioned earlier, regarding the characteristics of the criminals, as the main subject, wan. I believe that I'll have something to share with you all, wan, by the time you've counted down the number of days according to the number of fingers on both of your hands."

I couldn't find anything to criticize even in the way she had wrapped things up. Roroa scattered the holograms before holding onto the bottle with both of her hands once more and drinking the Lipton Ice Tea. She puffed out her cheeks like a pair of steam buns and displayed a satisfied expression on her face.

"Wan. So good..... This seeping scent. As I thought, I like the food from Earth the most, wan. Do you perhaps have alcohol? I actually like makgeolli."

"Sorry. I'm still a student.The Korean that came before me. Do you know about Ahyeon well?"

"Wan! He's just someone that I liked one-sidedly! Is he perhaps someone you know?"

"I've only heard his name."

I continued.

"I heard that he was a Korean who was here a long time ago, that he was here for about 4 years, and that he had taught the Earl and Zia the Korean language, and during that process, they became really close. The two of them wouldn't tell me anything more than this so I couldn't ask them about him either."

"Wan. I see..... Mm? But even so....."

“Do we give off a similar image? I’ve heard a couple of people say that casually.”

“Your black hair and black eyes are quite the same.”

That’s because we’re both Korean.

“You also give off a similar scent.”

As expected, I should wash up today.

“Waan~ but you’re certainly a bit different.”

Roroa laughed while her ears were pricked up.

I.

“What kind of person was he?”

“He was a person who let out a good voice, wan. He was a good person. Waan. Really, without any prejudice, he was an individual who doted on me and Kina.”

That wasn’t really what I was asking. The instant that thought had crossed my mind, Roroa took another sip of the Lipton Ice Tea and giggled.

“Of course, you probably weren’t asking for this kind of fragmentary impressions, right? Yujin. If you want a particular answer, then you need to first ask a precise question.”

I’m unsure whether she was a guard back when Ahyeon was still around, and there’s also a chance that a lot of time had passed since she had surpassed the age of being referred to as just a ‘girl’.

“Was he a male^[3]?”

“Wan. Yes.”

“How old did he look?”

“Waan…… actually, similar to how humans have a hard time figuring out the age of Saber-Fangs, we have a hard time figuring out the age of humans as well. Even Yujin is an otherworlder. Regardless, he had a beard, wore glasses, seemed like he had bad eyesight, and his body was so scrawny that it felt like if I were to ever bite into him, then even his bones would be torn out.”

A wimpy man, huh. Ever since I had guessed that he was someone who had served in the military, I kept in mind the thought that he could be an old man.

“What did he say he did in Korea?”

“He said he was a teacher. Wan. He taught kids. He said that he even made good money. But on the other hand, he said that he was starting to feel sick of that lifestyle of his, so I heard that since he was summoned, he tossed everything aside and decided to live here.”

“So he had a personality that couldn’t really be called responsible.”

“Hehe. But I think that that was just an excuse.”

Roroa closed her eyes as if she were reminiscing the past.

“That’s what he said, but he’s actually an individual who’s unable to look over twisted things. He got rid of a lot of bad customs and indictments, wan. You can even say that it was thanks to him that a Saber-Fang like me was able to become a part of the guards. Until then, they said that it was only possible for something like this to happen if the person in question had quite the impressive ability or if they were in places like the Twelve Earthly Branches.”

Racial discrimination.

‘It’s not discrimination but division.’ I had heard this stereotypical racist phrase before and I was aware that racism existed here. However, it seems things were worse than I had imagined. It was even a man from another world who had changed that. An otherworld reformation fantasy that felt as if it were from a manga.

And that fantasy…….

“That Ahyeon person, what happened to him in the end?”

“I’m not sure, wan.”

Roroo made an apologetic face.

“When Her Excellency the Earl was kidnapped, I was still the lowest of the lows in terms of rank. Except, I remember that at that time, each member of the *Merza’ kordia* (Translating…… Twelve arrows? Bullets? I’ll translate it as Twelve Bullets) disappeared one after another. Ahyeon was one of those people.”

As I thought, it was around the time of the kidnapping.

Wait.

Twelve Bullets?

“Was there perhaps 11 other people who were also standing in the same position as Ahyeon?”

“Wan?”

Roroo raised her ears upwards. Even if you look at me with eyes that feel as if they’re asking ‘You didn’t know?’, what am I supposed to do?

“I’ve only heard Ahyeon’s name. Were the 11 other people also Korean?”

“Waan. No. Ahyeon was the only Korean, wan. Since the number of worlds Her Excellency the Earl is able to meddle in is 12, there’s one person from each world, so a total of 12 people. It was like a group of elite guards that consisted of solely otherworlders.”

A chuunibyou-like setting had popped up all of a sudden.

If you consider the Earl’s age at that time, then it would be shounibyou^[4].

“They were called the Twelve Bullets, but the regular members were only Ahyeon and a few others, wan. The members rarely ever gathered all together. But during the rare occasions when they did, it was really amazing! Waan! Isn’t that so, Miss Ariya? Don’t you remember as well?”

Although a shounibyou had started it, it seems it was taken in well by the adults as well. Even Ariya, who had not uttered a single word ever since Roroa had appeared, showed a response to those words.

“It was amazing. I remember that even my father did not hide his awe whenever the Twelve Bullets gathered.”

“Wahaha, yup. He really did enjoy it. On the days the Twelve Bullets gathered, the guards would have a get-together, you know? He would always drink alcohol out of a tall glass and say ‘You saw them, right!? My goal is those people! We have to surpass them!’. That brusque man would say childish things like that.”

Ariya’s expression relaxed slightly. Roroa took another sip of the Lipton Ice Tea and made a face that appeared as if she were gazing far off into the distance.

“Nevertheless, as I thought, I liked Ahyeon the most, wan. He didn’t know how to fight. His body was weak. He sucked at exercising. Like that, he was a person who was absolutely

terrible at physical activities, but I was infatuated with him. Albeit, it's because of that that Kina felt as if she had her sister stolen from her, so she'd always say grouchy things..... but I still miss those days."

I recalled something once I saw her soft eyes.

"Is the reason why Kina growls at me because of that?"

"Wan..... that child is an idiot, after all. She thinks I'll end up like that again.Honestly, it'd be a lie if I said that I didn't have some expectations. I did say that you resembled him."

The Saber-Fang girl gazed at me with pupils that resembled the color of a brown teddy bear's fur.

"You're completely different from Ahyeon."

Silence.

"Obviously."

I spoke.

"I'm a different person, after all."

"That's right, isn't it? It's obvious, but, there are some people in the world who're unable to think of that obvious thought, wan."

After saying that, Roroa lowered herself from the mattress.

"I'll take my leave now, wan. It's already become this late. Thank you for your cooperation and I apologize for taking up so much of your time, wan. Now then."

"All right. See you next time."

"Yeap!"

Rorooa twirled around and folded down one ear before leaving the room with trot-like steps.



I turned on the iPad and recorded all of the information that I had obtained from the conversation that had gone back and forth just now.

Since I was able to figure out what kind of person Rorooa was, I decided to push the information regarding the assailants to the back. I typed everything down, putting a priority on Rorooa's relations, Ahyeon, and the Twelve Bullets. There were several matters that I had to verify.

"Ariya. Can I ask you a couple of things?"

"Me?"

"Yeah. If I perhaps ask a question that's troubling to answer, then you don't have to. Was your father a guard?"

"He was the vice-captain."

Ariya lowered her eyes.

"Holder of the title Pure Black Fist Knight. He was also a member of the Brown Lion Royal Guards."

"Brown Lion Royal Guards instead of the Silver Lion Royal Guards..... Ah, around the time of the previous earl?"

"Yes. However, he passed away before much time had passed after the esteemed..... after the current earl was kidnapped. My mother also became sick around that time. I had no other choice but to stop what I was doing at that time and find a job. Fortunately, I was able to work as a maid

thanks to Miss Sophna's consideration."

"Mm~~ Hey."

It was then that Sii had hesitantly opened her mouth. Ariya ignored her and looked at me.

"Fair Grace. Do you have any more questions?"

I got Sii's consent after glancing at her and asked another question.

"Did you meet Alshi for the first time while working as a maid?"

"....."

"I said this earlier, but you don't have to answer if it's troubling."

"No, it isn't particularly..... I was just wondering why you were curious about that. We did know each other before, but we didn't become closer until after I started to work as a maid. As a slight senior above me, she helped me a lot when I was trying to get accustomed to the work here as a maid."

"Hey, wait!"

Sii raised her voice. Ariya turned towards Sii with annoyed eyes.

"What is it, Sii?"

"Ah, mm~~ You know..... since we're talking about Alshi. The thing we saw in the video. Shouldn't we have said something about it? Why was she and Alshi rubbing against one another in the bathroom?"

"You, did you not hear me when I told you to not drag my lover into this?"

“I-I wasn’t dragging her in! It’s just that the situation was…….”

“And what do you mean by ‘say something’? How do you plan to say something? ‘We were watching a video that was shot from a hidden camera and saw it’?”

Ariya’s voice was as cold as the air at the crack of dawn. Sii’s face was also red as if it were touched by the cold air of dawn.

“We just have to think about how we’re going to ask! It’s just that the fact that we went by it without even saying a single thing…… I-It’s not something that I can ask, and it’s a topic that’s difficult for even Yujin to say something about…….”

“It isn’t necessary.”

“But…….”

“I said it wasn’t needed. Furthermore, I’m saying this for the third time now, but this isn’t something which you need to be concerned about.”

Ariya uttered with a heavily irritated tone mixed into her words. Sii didn’t back down and shouted with a determined face.

“Yujin! Say something to her!”

You’re going to pass the baton to me in this timing while also making that face?

No, that’s Sii for you…….

“Miss Sii, things will only get ugly if you try to get between a couple.”

“Then you just have to make it not ugly! Yup~~! Make it quickly!”

“If the opposition has refused, then even that will not go as planned. Moreover…….” No, this wasn’t the right time. “At any rate, there’s no need to be concerned about this, Miss Sii.”

“But…….”

“It’s all right. Miss Sii has gone through a lot today. Ariya, you as well. Since there’s still some time left before I have to give my routine report, get some rest and enjoy the new sheet and blanket.”

“Yes, Fair Grace.”

Ariya replied. Sii shut her mouth with a displeased face. Her face was saying that she wasn’t wrong and that she had yet to understand, but since I had said this much, she was going to endure it for a bit.

In other words, her expression meant that she wasn’t going to endure for long, but it was fine. She most likely won’t actually cause an incident and before long, starting from the assailants incident, urgent matters will start to be wrapped up. That was my prediction.

Mm, predictions had the tendency of being off the mark.

Footnotes

1. [↑] I'll be referring to this city as Water Dragon City whenever they talk in this world's language. When they talk in Korean or when Yujin monologues, I'll be leaving it as City of Confinement
2. [↑] Pronounced 'Yeh-ap'.
3. [↑] Until now, they've been constantly referring to Ahyeon with the gender neutral pronoun. Yujin has been calling him a guy in his monologues ever since he assumed that Ahyeon had gone to the military.
4. [↑] Chuuni is basically middle school 2nd year(8th grade), and shouni is elementary school 2nd year. Chuugakusei = Middle schooler. Shougakusei = Elementary schooler.



It's not rare for an irresponsible person to receive love.

Unlike the misunderstanding that most people have, the virtue of 'taking responsibility' doesn't help that much when it comes to the topic of receiving love. There are even many occasions where that virtue is unable to carry out its role as a preservative that's supposed to maintain the love which you had received once for a long period of time. Although I have never met anyone in my life whose sense of responsibility was as immense as my aunt's, I never loved her. Even if the day that I did love her were to ever arrive, it most likely will not be because of that woman's sense of responsibility. Ironically, it'll be the complete opposite. It'll most likely be because I'll be unable to let her grow old as a small, lonely grandma by herself. In other words, because of my own sense of responsibility.

Be that as it may, would that be a happy love? It probably won't be once it's done. That love will be consumed. If it isn't continuously filled, then it will one day be depleted. Tearing down and removing an inserted love is an expectation.

My expectations make me feel pain. It will kill me in time.



I can conclude that my prediction was wrong in largely two different ways.

First was the matter regarding the assailants. I have yet to solve that case even though several days have passed since that time. I was still lacking a couple of puzzle pieces. If I didn't have them, then I should have just initiated my plan while in that lacking state, but I intended to watch for a bit longer.

The second matter was related to Sii's actions. I had just returned from collecting the data from the hidden cameras only to discover Alshi seated on the mattress like a china doll.

“.....”

“.....”

I was the one who broke this silence.

“Hi. What brings you here?”

“Acting like you don’t know. I came here because, your Whitey called me.”

Alshi responded while not hiding the fact that she was feeling under the weather. Not only was she frowning, but it felt as if there were barbed wires wrapped around her tone. I sat down and looked at her from a spot that wasn’t close enough to make her raise her guard or a place that was far enough to make her scowl.

“Why’d she call you?”

“.....Do you really not know?”

“Yeah. Tell me and I’ll listen.”

I politely gathered my hands on top of my lap and got into a posture that showed her that I would listen to her courteously. Alshi was quiet for a moment before dropping her tension.

“She said that she had something to say, to me regarding Ariya. To come, here the moment I was done with my work.”

So that’s why she’s here. This was my mistake. I underestimated Sii’s ability to take action.

But for her to come here just because she was told to. If she’s going to blatantly display her displeasure like earlier, then she shouldn’t have come here in the first place. She’s either docile or the keyword ‘Ariya’ had that much meaning to her.

“Can you guess why?”

“.....” She gave me a sidelong gaze. **“I should, be asking you that.”**

I avoided an immediate answer. Although it's not like there wasn't a docile side to her, she was most likely more concerned about her lover right now.

“No, sorry.”

Once I lowered my head and apologized, Alshi groaned.

“.....You don't, have to particularly apologize, you know? It's not, even your fault.”

“That's generous of you.”

“You're the one, who lacks too much pride, you know? You bow your head all the time. Always, suffering a loss.”

I acted as if I were ashamed.

“Sorry. As Ariya's savior, I should probably be going around with more dignity.”

Alshi glanced at me. Whether it's because couples tended to resemble one another or because they were a couple because they resembled one another, but her indifferent pupils were reminiscent of Ariya's own gaze. Nevertheless, the light that was lingering in her eyes was much deeper than Ariya's.

“.....I should be the one, to apologize. I was being too rude, to the person who had saved my lover.”

Alshi bowed her head instead. I was a bit surprised by this adult-like response.

“No. You're right. People must be talking about Ariya behind her back a lot nowadays, right? Since she's been sticking close to me and Sii.”

“You’re the tag along and they say that she’s close to that Whitey. They’re really, idiots. For those girls, who only comforted Ariya when her thieving was revealed, to say those kinds of things just because of a reason like that.”

But she wasn’t that much of an adult.

“You calling Sii by that nickname is an action that puts more strength into their words.”

“.....Do you intend, to lecture me?”

“Do you want to take it in as a lecture?”

Alshi didn’t nod. Her face didn’t become red in embarrassment either.

“Everyone can’t be happy.”

She started off saying that.

“I’m saying this while believing that you won’t, tell Her Excellency the Earl. Working here means that you’re, accompanied by that much stress as well. There is a need, for a target to take that stress out on. That’s why, I’m not saying that it’s reasonable. It’s just that, there are things that can’t be helped, and the stuff related to Sii is one of those things.”

Mm.

I know that there’s no point in getting upset at this girl. That’s why I won’t get mad at her. However.

“You mustn’t justify it.”

“.....”

“The stress from having to keep facing the unstable Silver Lion Earl while also living in the same castle. The sense of constraint that this castle gives. The pressure that comes

from handling a hard communal life. The disorientating anxiety that comes from the fact that the Head Vassal, who's also the one in charge of everything, has shut herself in her research room. All of those negative emotions, I understand them. However, those things don't make the things that mustn't be done into things that can be done."

There are things in the world that truly must not be done.

"Therefore, thoughts like what you had said a moment ago, you mustn't convince yourself that those thoughts are logical nor should you accept them as so. If you do, then you are not allowed to believe that you understand reality, and you are not allowed to consider yourself as an adult. That isn't maturity, but rather, that's simply cowardice."

".....What do you, know?"

"I know."

I spoke.

Alshi looked into my eyes.

Stillness.

".....It's something, that everyone is doing."

Alshi continued.

"By making a rank, below their own, they pour their stress down onto, it. Everyone feels as if everything works better by, doing so. But why are you saying that, we shouldn't do this regardless of that?"

"My voice is able to reach you, isn't it?"

I paused for a moment before continuing.

"Please call Sii by her name."

Alshi didn't respond and averted her gaze. That was enough. She won't call Sii by that nickname anymore.

The door opened just in time and both Sii and Ariya entered the room.

“I’ve already said it several times before, but it’s fine. Receiving your apology is starting to become bothersome, so stop.”

“Mm…… but I’m really sorry…… I tripped on my feet but who would have thought that you would be in front of me and the stairs would be in front of you…… but if you think about it, everything would have been fine if you weren’t walking in front of me. In the first place, there’s a really high chance that I tripped on my feet because you were blocking my line of sight! You clump of muscles!”

The reason why Sii abruptly became bolder in the middle of her sentence was probably deeply related to the fact that she had sat down on my lap at that same exact moment. Instead of being pressured by that charisma, Ariya wordlessly approached and gave Sii a bear hug.

“Gyaaaaaaak! Help me, Yujin!”

I quietly handed Sii to Ariya. I had become accustomed to this over the past couple of days.

“……How incredibly natural.”

It was obvious that Alshi would mutter that bitterly. Ariya turned towards that Alshi.

“What brings you here, Alshi?”

It was a somewhat cold tone. Alshi didn't respond affectionately either.

“I was called here by the girl who you’re hugging, right in front of your lover right now.”

“Sii, did you tell Alshi to come here?”

Ariya looked down at Sii and asked. Sii was barely able to push herself away from Ariya in order to speak.

“As I thought, you need to talk to each other!”

Ariya looked tired. She let go of Sii and turned towards Alshi.

Alshi closed one eye.

“Is something the matter? Why is Sii, acting like that all of a sudden?”

“It’s because you’ve been sticking close to that sword-tooth.”

A tired voice. Ariya spoke in a tone that sounded as if she didn’t care anymore. Alshi was silent for a moment before tilting her head.

“How is that related, to Sii?”

“Ask her that yourself.”

“Sii. Why did you call me here and, how exactly is it related to you?”

Ariya had the tendency of speaking sharply as well, but Alshi’s words were so sharp that they made Ariya’s tone feel like wooden swords. Sii faltered, but she must have been able to recharge her courage by hiding behind me since she proceeded to speak boldly.

“We’re living together, so it’s obvious that I’d show at least that much concern! Ariya has been constantly looking dispirited, you know? I feel like I’ll get infected by her lethargy.”

The acuity that was prominent on Alshi's face waned down. She looked at Ariya. Ariya shook her head marginally and Alshi placed her hand against her forehead.

“If you look back at what happened a second ago, then you two don't seem that close, but let's put that aside. Sii. This is an issue between, me and Ariya. It'll only, be a hindrance if a third party tries to get involved.”

Alshi then glared at Ariya. Her eyes looked as if they were asking 'Do I have to be the one to say this? Even though you live together with her in the same room?' Ariya must have understood her gaze as she had flared up. However, Ariya wasn't the one to open their mouth in order to refute Alshi's implication. Sii spoke.

“Ariya said the same thing!”

Ariya paused and looked at Sii. Sii shouted confidently.

“But I'm already concerned. If it's a situation between the two of you, then it would be correct to resolve it yourselves, but you shouldn't cause harm to the people around you during that process, right? If you still want to say things like that anyway, then why don't you just resolve it right here and now!? We'll excuse ourselves!”

It's great that you're shouting confidently, but I'd like it if you didn't put more strength into the arm that's hugging me. If you consider the fact that she's currently receiving the glares of both the martial artist type maids, then it's not like I didn't understand her, but I feel like my spine is going to break if she keeps this up.

However, regardless of my situation, Sii's logic was right. If Alshi wanted to declare that it's a problem solely between the two of them, then they shouldn't have influenced the people around them during that process. Alshi's declaration had already broken the instant Sii had found out about it and requested for their situation to be mediated. Alshi and Ariya must have arrived at a similar conclusion as their faces appeared as if they were looking at Sii in a new light

now.

Alshi spoke.

“I apologize that, my idiot lover made you worry. But it’s a matter that’s difficult, to resolve right this instant.”

The strength in Sii’s hug became a bit weaker. In her position, it was probably because she had received an answer that was more polite than she had expected. Alshi continued.

“I can’t tell, you the reason yet, but I can promise you that, it won’t take too long. At the very latest, it’ll be over before the end of this month.”

Today was February 10th. If she intended to resolve it within this month, then in this world’s standard, it meant that there were 18 days left.

“M-Mmm~~ If that’s the case…….”

Sii uttered. Although her voice was trembling, the shaking was coming from her joy. As a result of her own idea and action, she was able to receive an oral promise. This was most likely truly an incredible occurrence for Sii who suffered from chronic lack of self-esteem.

Sii was prepared to accept it as that.

It seems Ariya wasn’t.

“Will it really be resolved by then?”

Ariya asked with a tired voice as she faced Alshi. Alshi’s gaze instantaneously became cold.

It wasn’t for long. Alshi let out a sigh.

“Yeah. So don’t, worry.”

“.....I believe in you.”

“I know.”

Alshi stood up from her seat.

Alshi stood in front of Ariya. Similar to how I saw them when I first came out of the basement a month ago, the two girls had firm bodies. Ariya was taller, and as I thought, if you compared the atmospheres each of them they gave off, then Alshi was more modest and passive. However, it wasn't difficult to figure out who had the true initiative in their relationship. The anxiety that could be felt emanating from Ariya couldn't be felt from Alshi. Alshi spoke.

“I'll be off now.Yujin.”

“Yeah?”

“I'm grateful, for the words you gave me earlier. Your words, are correct. But Yujin. In order for those correct words, to stay upright, there is a need for you to keep on protecting them. Every word that you had said from your own mouth earlier, can you protect them all?”

I nodded.

“Can you continue to protect them?”

I nodded.

“Okay then.”

Alshi calmed her breathing and left the room without saying anything more.



Sii didn't hide her glee. She quickly hugged me from behind and

rubbed her cheek against me.

“Fufu, how was it, Yujin? My charisma!”

I should give Sii her due.

“Miss Sii did very well.”

“Mm~~! Then hurry up and praise my charisma!”

Since the breath brushing against the back of my neck was rather hot, I turned around from my seat and patted her head. Ariya watched us with complicated eyes before speaking.

“Fair Grace. What were you talking about with Alshi?”

“Ah. I’m curious about that as well. What did you say to her?”

Sii asked while being hugged and looking up from my chest. I answered.

“I told her to stop calling Sii by the term Whitey.”

“Yujin…….”

Eyes that were sparkling like a sun on the horizon were directed towards me. This was a bit bitter.

“There’s nothing to be moved about. It’s something obvious after all.”

“Mm…… but I’m still thankful. I want to be able to do that kind of natural act of consideration like Yujin does.”

If that’s the case, then how about starting by talking in this world’s language when Ariya’s here? I didn’t ask for her to do this. It wasn’t the right time yet. Of course, my reason wasn’t as simple as Sii’s own which was to just give a relative sense of alienation to Ariya and show off her relationship with me.

“It’s almost time to give my routine report to the Earl.”

The red glow in Sii’s eyes grew dark like twilight.

“.....Really, can you not skip out on it just for today? I was at the height of being delighted..... No, I’m just saying that. I know. We have to go. We can’t forget our goal after all.”

My and Sii’s ultimate goal was to receive an apology from the Earl. We couldn’t tell Ariya about this yet. I couldn’t drag a girl who just wanted to repay her debt towards me into a confrontation with the Earl. Moreover, it was also because I wasn’t certain whether we could trust her that far or not yet. In that regard, talking in Korean was the perfect communication method in order for us to speak to one another in secret.

Even now, Ariya was silently waiting for our conversation to be over. I spoke.

“Sorry, it became a bit long, didn’t it?”

“That isn’t so, Fair Grace. Rather than that, the time..... will you be going today as well?”

“Yeah. I’ll be going.”

I stood up. Sii let go of the embrace as well and stood up after me. Ariya was waiting for us while holding the door open.

We walked towards the Silver Lion Earl’s office.



I finished giving the routine report with no trouble. The Silver Lion Earl grinned widely and stroked my head.

“Mm mm. Good. Very good.”

“All right. Show me the task for today.”

“Ah-ah. Don’t skip the procedures, Mr. Yujin. You have to receive your doting first. Stand still.”

I stood. The Silver Lion Earl got up from her seat and pounced on me. Nom, she bit. Her teeth dug into my nape. They were hard, even, and sharp. The sensation was tepid at first before it gradually became hot. It wasn’t until the temperature that was inside the Silver Lion Earl’s mouth and the temperature of my skin had become aligned did she remove her lips.

“I can’t say that you’re appetizing.”

Between the lip mark and the teeth marks, I wasn’t sure which one was making me feel itchy.

“Is it because you’re a boy? Or is it because you haven’t been managing your meals properly? It might possibly be because you weren’t cooked. Hmhmhm. What do you think the issue is, Mr. Yujin?”

I didn’t answer and merely kissed the end of her hand. The Silver Lion Earl stood with her legs crossed and grinned.[\[1\]](#)

“Well, if I’m to speak while borrowing someone’s personal experience, then would all three be correct? It’s about livestock and their eating, habits. Regarding a girl---in another word, a female. Female since it’s about livestock. Ah hah ha, in any case, if you raise them well, you know? They say their flesh becomes that much softer. Their smell becomes aromatic as well. Do you want to learn about it?”

The Silver Lion Earl’s white hand curved like a fish hook and hooked onto my lip.

“It’s about livestock, you know? And it’s about eating, habits. Eating habits. They’re raised while only being fed fruits. Nyamnyam. Nyamnyam. No grain, no meat, only fruits. Ah, they also crush and

grind the fruits so they can be digested easily. The reason behind that is because they're raised in a situation where their ability to exercise is limited. They put their arms and legs into a nail clipper, GIANT ver., and clip, clip! After that, with medicine---yeess, with the same medicine that Mr. Yujin had used, they heal the surface of the cuts. After that happens, they're like a matryoshka, no, they become like a gingerbread person and are thus unable to move properly. That's why the owners grind the fruits. Aren't the owners brilliant for even caring about their livestock's circumstances? Ah hah hah hah ha!"

While pulling on my lip, she bent her thumb and stuck it up my nose.

"That's why it's about livestock, you know? Like I said, it's eating, habits, you know? Don't misunderstand, okay? If they only eat fruits like that for about 6 weeks, then their meat becomes plump. Ah, of course, there are times when they refuse their meals. Because of an illness of the mind, they believe that they can become skinny. However, while they're before the reality of hoses and funnels, that sort of mental defense mechanism is meaningless! Ah ha, can you imagine? Forcefully like this, a funnel is shoved into their mouths. They pour it in. Until they're able to see their stomachs become visibly plump, gulp, gulp! I heard that when certain owners have a lot of stress piled up they even mix their own fecal matter into the food and feed it to them, hm. If you want good meat, then you shouldn't do that, right? Cherish your food. You have to cherish your livestock as well, right?!"

Silence.

"Like that, once they've become plump and their body odor has become flowery, they're then butchered. That meat is then marinated with herbs and spices before being cooked on top of a heated pan. They say it's delicious! Of course, meat that's raised with that much affection would obviously taste amaaazing. Ah hah hah ha ha. So that's why I want to ask you, Mr. Yujin."

The Silver Lion Earl kissed my forehead before putting more

strength into her thumb and pushing my nose.

“Can I have a small slice? A reeaally small piece. Just 1cm x 1cm. Okay? With the skin intact. Yes? Only slightly. As big as your finger nail. You won’t die, you know? Because you won’t die.”

I raised one arm.

I folded my sleeve up. Before the Silver Lion Earl could even pause, I ripped out a portion of my flesh from the inner part of my arm with my nails. Clench……! The instant I twisted and pulled, my sight became blurry for a moment before a piece of my flesh was ripped out. A pain that felt as if thousands of fire ants were rampaging about however they pleased. I disregarded it. Ignoring pain was what I was best at.

Blood dripped from the piece of flesh that was on top of my palm and also the area under my arm that it was torn from.

I spoke.

“Here.”

“…….”

The Silver Lion Earl looked down at me. Her gaze was as cold as ice.

“You.”

Silence.

“You know I said that as a joke, don’t you?”

That’s right. However, depending on my response, she would have most likely obstinately forced me to at least shed some blood. That fact, I was aware of it, and the Silver Lion Earl must have realized by now that I was also aware of that fact. The Silver Lion Earl closed her eyes before opening them again. A long sigh. She spoke.

“I guess my joke was a bit excessive. But still, this…… damn it. Mikatni’s adopted daughter! What are you sitting around for?! Hurry up and clean this up!”

Sii, who had been standing while leaning against the wall, approached and wiped the underside of my arm. I wordlessly accepted the touch of her trembling hands. The Silver Lion Earl narrowed her eyes.

“Tsk. Has that arm not healed yet? It’s fine to stay in the sick room longer and freeload on just the food, you know?”

The fact that that wasn’t the reason why Sii’s hands were shaking, of course, the Silver Lion Earl knew, and Sii was also aware of the fact that the Earl knew. I quickly spoke before the sight of Sii clenching her teeth could enter the Silver Lion Earl’s line of sight.

“Yeah, but I can’t leave her by herself because of the assault.”

“Hum? Has that still not been resolved yet?”

“If it were, then wouldn’t you be the first person to be told about it?”

“That’s true, but---hm. What’s up with this? **Ariya.**”

Ariya, who had been standing next to Sii, raised her head.

“Yes, Your Excellency.”

“Go and tell the guard executives to come here.”

Ariya left the room while keeping her head bowed. While that happened, Sii continued to wipe off my blood.

“Yujin…….”

Sii continued to clean the blood while repeatedly replacing the handkerchiefs with a tearful expression on her face. There’s no way that the blood would stop by just cleaning it. Eventually, Sii must

have run out of handkerchiefs as she was now holding a blood-soaked handkerchief against my wound and nothing more. The Silver Lion Earl pulled back her shoulders and raised her hand as if she were going to use her summoning ability, but she soon shook her head and took something out of her skirt.

“Mikatni’s adopted daughter!”

The Silver Lion Earl tossed a healing medicine. After nearly shattering the bottle in the process of catching it and nearly breaking the neck of the vial while trying to uncork it, Sii applied that medicine on my arm. Her hands were still shaking so about 1/3 of the medicine ended up falling to the floor. The Silver Lion Earl, who had walked over to our side and was watching over us, gnashed her teeth audibly.

“Damn it! You suck at applying it. Give it to me.”

Although Sii had shrunk her shoulders back as if she were instinctively trying to refuse, that very action ended up making more medicine fall to the floor. After witnessing that, it seems she decided to just obey the Silver Lion Earl’s order. The Silver Lion Earl received the bottle and poured its content on top of her hand. While she did that, Sii grabbed onto my shoulder and wrist and firmly held them in a way that made the wound clearly visible.

The medicine applied by the Silver Lion Earl overlaid the wound that Sii was revealing.

The injury quickly healed. The Silver Lion Earl repeated the same remark unpleasantly.

“Bite off all Twelve Fingers.”

In Korean, that phrase meant something similar to ‘Fucking damn it’.

I bowed my head.

“Thanks.”

“Stop talking nonsense and clean the floor.”

The reason why I couldn't follow that order was because Sii had knelt down and removed the blood by wiping it off with her sleeves. Instead of saying anything more, the Silver Lion Earl just clicked her tongue. Thankfully, we then heard knocking on the door.

“Enter.”

Ariya and two people wearing uniforms entered the room.



One of the two people was a man. That's right, a man---men existed in this world as well. He was shorter than me by a very slight amount. Although he appeared as if he were between 50 and 40 years old, if you consider the fact that he appeared like that even though he was properly wearing a brown uniform and also had a clean shave, then there was a high chance that he was older than that. His short-cut hair was gray, matching the color of his eyes. The cracks in his eyes, which the people of this world were destined to have, were jet black. Excluding those things, there was nothing else that was special about him. The impression he gave was that dim.

The other person was Roroa. Although she showed a delighted face the instant she saw me, her eyes soon became wide and her nostrils flared. She had gotten the smell of my blood.

The eyes of all three people who had just entered the room were directed towards Sii who was kneeling by my side and wiping the blood. Ariya immediately moved to help Sii, but the guards were unable to do so. The hesitating guards stretched their arms forward in the shape of six fingers and saluted.

“Hello, Your Excellency the Earl. I am the vice-captain of the guards of the Water Dragon City, Ryungste Bereji.”

“Hello, wan, Your Excellency the Earl. I am the assistant commissioner of the guards of the Water Dragon City, Roroa Ara Harte, wan.”

The Silver Lion Earl waved her hand and brushed their greetings aside.

“Yeah, you came well. I wanted to ask you a question regarding the assault case. Has there been any progress with the investigation?”

Ryungste blinked his eyes. He let out an ‘uh-‘ sound and turned towards Roroa. Roroa folded her ears down in an ashamed manner.

“Wan…… my apologies. Excluding the report that I gave Your Excellency previously, no new information has been uncovered, wan.”

While leaning her back against her desk, the Silver Lion Earl tapped her finger on her lips. Tap, and tap.

“It feels as if approximately 1 week has passed.”

Another tap.

“I feel like 1 week has passed.”

The Silver Lion Earl stood properly.

“Give me a summary of the situation. Unknown dog bone-like bastards entered this young lady’s castle. They wore masks, they wore maid uniforms, and they placed their hands on this young lady’s possession. And yet, are you telling me that you, the people in charge of the public order of the city and the security of this castle, were unable to obtain any new information despite having made a collective effort for over a week?”

“My apologies, Your Excellency.”

“I have nothing to say, wan, Your Excellency.”

The two guard executives bowed their heads. The Silver Lion Earl narrowed her eyes.

“How about Sophna?”

A disagreeable stillness. Roroa responded this time as well.

“A report has been given to her, wan, but it seems even Miss Sophna didn’t have anything particular to say yet…….”

“Is she hibernating?”

“That does not seem to be the case…… the meal and note left inside the basket were both gone. There was a response as well. Sir Yudia also visited Miss Sophna several times. However, as Your Excellency knows, this period is…….”

“Yeah, it’s probably because of the central source of water. But still, damn it, there were assailants in the castle and yet she doesn’t even come up from her room to take a look? That damned hag.”

“Wan, Miss Sophna most likely isn’t unconcerned, wan.” Roroa spoke cautiously. **“I believe that she’s moving her information network in her own way. Is she not a mage? She most likely needs time to concentrate, wan.”**

The Silver Lion Earl stared at Roroa.

“There’s no need for you to make excuses for her.”

“Wan…… my apologies, Your Excellency. I just…….”

“It’s fine. Put aside the hag who’s shut in her room and sucking on honey. Lucky for her, right now is the time where she can use the central water source as an excuse after all. However, even while disregarding that hag, one week. I said

it earlier but it's been a week. Are you telling me that you made absolutely no progress during that time? Why are you receiving a salary?"

If I leave her like this, then she'll nag at them for a long time.

"Earl."

"Ang? What is it, Mr. Yujin?"

The Silver Lion Earl turned towards me while making it clear that she was in a bad mood.

Although I wanted to ask if she were a kid, considering what happened earlier, she really was a kid.

"The maids and I are watching. Those people probably have their own dignity."

"Dignity? Diiiiigniiity? If they're going to be concerned about that, then they should fulfill their responsibilities. Dignity even though they aren't able to carry out their duty? That's as nonsensical as a bunny-pig doing a somersaaaault."

"Even so, you shouldn't handle things like this. Weren't you in the middle of carrying out the Silver Lion Earl 2.0 campaign?"

"I aaam doing something similar to that due to a certain Mr. Someone's speech."

"Which Her Excellency the Earl was it that was happy about receiving a tremendous ovation?"

"That may be the caaase, but, nono, put the jokes aside and be serious. Mr. Yujin, this is a severe problem, you know? I said it earlier, but pieces of trash roamed around my castle. For the ones who were assaulted to be Mr. Yujin and Mikatni's adopted daughter, putting that aside---actually, that isn't something that can be put aside either---I can be assaulted as well. Within my own castle! The

fact that they weren't able to prevent that from happening, weren't able to find those pieces of trash, and weren't able to obtain any new information, Mr. Yujin, why do I have to give these people a salary?"

Different from her harsh words, the ruler's logic, which those words were taking shape as, was firm. I spoke as if I were trying to calm her down.

"If you're able to make them work to a degree that befits the amount of salary they receive by chewing them out like that, then go ahead. But that's not so, is it? If there's a problem then examine it and solve it together."

The Silver Lion Earl groaned. She scratched the back of her head a bunch of times before clearly scowling.

"Damn it, if you had obtained a fragment of life from one of them by either clawing at them or latching onto their heads, then this would have ended neatly."

"Making the victim take responsibility is an easy thing to do, and if something is easy, then that normally means that it isn't the answer."

"NyesNyes, I understand already, Scholar Yujin." She switched to speaking in this world's language and continued. **"Whatever, it's fine. All right---let's solve it. Ryungste, Roroo. Give me a report about your investigation progress."**

The two guard executives, who were making faces that looked as if they were inside a flea bath while the Earl and I were talking in Korean, quickly raised their heads.

"Ehem, ah, uh, Miss Roroo?"

"Yes, as I had reported before, we started off by gathering information in order to get a grasp of the situation. Wan, we then, on the basis of the information we had received, obtained the keynotes for the investigation, wan. After that, we immediately carried out the investigation, but we were

unable to obtain anything concrete, wan.”

“Then that means your keynotes were wrong. Or that means your investigation method itself was wrong. Have you ever thought about carrying out the investigation with Yujin?”

The Silver Lion Earl asked. This time as well, Ryungste merely cleared his throat and kept blinking his eyes, but Roroa answered quickly.

“We did not, wan.”

That fast response seemed to have harmed the Silver Lion Earl’s mood.

“Why?”

“.....Investigating is a task that’s meant for professionals, wan. This isn’t a problem of intelligence, but rather, it’s something more fundamental than that. It’s a problem on whether that individual can be trusted or not, wan.”

It was small, but Sii clearly shrunk her shoulders back. Considering her field of vision, the Silver Lion Earl shouldn’t have been able to see that, but she folded her arms.

“I trust him though. I’m pretty sure that, as the individual who had received the twelfth chalice from His Majesty, this young lady had bestowed upon Yujin the title of squire.”

“Your Excellency, among the horses that are being raised in the Kingdom of the Twelve Earthly Branches, there is a horse that has received the title of marquiss, wan. However, that doesn’t mean the horse is treated like a noble, does it, wan?”

It seems Ryungste must have felt as if worms were squirming through his veins. Roroa was not being pushed back even while

talking with the lord, so it was only fair that the immediate superior, who was in the same room as that subordinate, would feel like that. However, it appears the lunatic magic-casting lord had become cool-headed in reverse.

“Comparisons end up being risky on many occasions, but that doesn’t seem to be the case when the real thing is the one to give that comparison. Isn’t that so, Miss ‘Dog Knight of Justice’(正義犬, Kuros’ rixia)’?”

Roroa twitched. While keeping her arms folded, the Silver Lion Earl spoke sarcastically.

“That’s right, have you been staying in touch with that sponsor of yours? I wouldn’t be surprised if it turned out that you two were exchanging erotic novels, but I’d like it if you avoided that. The postal service wasn’t made for that purpose after all.”

“.....My loyalty is towards Your Excellency, wan.”

“It’s quite peculiar when the fellow who had received both their title and peerage from another person is the one to say that.”

“I..... wan, the Orange Hawk Prince had proposed to Your Excellency, so......”

“That proposal, this young lady has never accepted it.”

Silence.

“Even if I were to have accepted. The Orange Hawk Prince is not this young lady. This city is this young lady’s city, Dog Knight of Justice. Have you forgotten who it’s thanks to that you’re able to wear that uniform despite being a Saber-Fang?”

“..... I have not forgotten, wan.”

“If you didn’t forget, then---.”

“The fact that I’m able to wear this uniform,” Roroa spoke while sticking her chest out. **“is thanks to Ahyeon, wan.”**

A stillness that felt as if death itself had been engulfed flowed through the room.

“You,”

The Silver Lion Earl continued.

“I can tear you apart right this instant.”

The Silver Lion Earl declared---

“I can tear off that ear, rip out your eye, and tie that body, that’s not even 1 meter tall, onto a pulley and stretch you out until you’re as tall as your unsheathed state. I can make it so that your internal organs and bones burst out like the cotton inside of a teddy bear as your small limbs are ripped off.”

A voice that melted through the skin like hydrochloric acid and seeped into the bones.

“Can you tell me a reason why this young lady shouldn’t?”

“Your Excellency......”

Roroa was gazing at the Earl as if she were pleading.

“Your Excellency, I too was born in this city and I cherish this city as well, wan. My sincere loyalty is towards Your Excellency.”

“How splendid. Although I don’t think that’s an answer to my question.”

“Towards that sincere and loyal military personnel..... that guard, there is no way that Your Excellency the Earl

would execute them without reason, wan.Because Your Excellency, is fair, wan.”

The Silver Lion Earl clenched her fists and opened them.

She spoke.

“Never say that person’s name while you’re before me ever again.”

Roroa gazed at the Earl with sad eyes. The Silver Lion Earl continued.

“Let’s go back to the previous topic. How many people have you assigned to this task?”

“.....Five people were assigned, wan.”

The Silver Lion Earl shut her mouth and went silent for a moment. Shortly after, she looked up towards the ceiling.

“That’s 1% of the guards. Pieces of trash went in and out of the lord’s castle and yet you’ve assigned only that many people? Loyal and sincere military personnel, did you not call yourself a guard? What do you think about this, vice-captain, assistant commissioner, Dog Knight of Justice?”

“Uh..... I, I entrusted this..... case to Miss Roroa, while..... trusting her completely......”

Ryungste stuttered. Roroa made a strained face.

“Your Excellency, we absolutely did not treat Your Excellency the Earl’s castle with negligence, wan. It’s regulation. Important matters---there are more important matters, wan. Doesn’t Your Excellency know.....?”

“There are more important matters? Ah ha, are you saying that there’s something more important than the fact that an

intruder had entered the lord's castle, Dog Knight of Justice?"

"Yes, it's the water, wan!"

The Silver Lion Earl paused. Roroa made a pleading expression once more.

"Your Excellency is aware, right?! The flow from the central water source..... although it's something that always happens around this time..... disputes occur on a daily basis--previously there were even corpses that had fallen into the waterway, wan. Adding to that, there's the preparation for the arena.....Your Excellency should be aware that during this time, the number of guests increases by two to four times the average amount, wan. Just two days ago, a gang of adventurers, who were said to have come from the Cat Earl's territory, waved their swords around in the heart of the city and caused a scene, wan..... the fact that more of our manpower will be temporarily transferred..... Your Excellency."

Roroa was nearly in tears. Her body which was small like a dog also gave off that much weight in her appeal as well.

"There are guards who are stationed at this castle at all times, wan. The Head Vassal Miss Sophna, Miss Zia, and of course, Your Excellency the Earl reside in this castle as well, wan. However, we do not go outside of this castle, to the city. As they are our good citizens, we do not have a remarkable public order which lets our people and our guests feel at ease, wan. Within this state, in order to cherish this city and the citizens, in order to do what I can do as an executive of the guards, in order to decide where more troops will be placed......"

Roroa was unable to speak further. The line of sight of everyone in the room was directed towards the girl who had shut her mouth and

was folding her ears. Ariya was the only one with a cold gaze.

The Silver Lion Earl spoke.

“So, in other words, instead of flattering this young lady, you decided to do what you could as an executive of the guards.”

“.....I believed that Your Excellency the Earl would have wanted the same......”

“Be quiet.”

Roroa flinched. The Silver Lion Earl spoke coldly.

“All right. Let’s say that your words are correct. Nevertheless, doesn’t that mean that as a result of assigning five people, the gain was zero? A different result may have occurred if you were to have assigned ten or twenty people. Or you could have just assigned only one person and sent the other four off to do something else! In the end, because you had decided to choose five people, a number which isn’t even here or there, it became nothing more than a waste. Has this young lady said anything wrong?”

“I have nothing to say......”

“Then stay quiet! Why are you acting all boastful and trying to talk back!?”

Roroa sunk her head. I spoke up.

“Satisfied?”

The Silver Lion Earl turned towards me with eyes filled with annoyance.

“YessYess. After stomping on an outspoken subordinate with my authority, I feel veryveryveryvery pleased. Is that fine, Mr. Yujin? Or

do you want me to do the same thing to you too?"

I turned towards Roroa. Although the superior was Ryungste, it was evident who did the actual work.

"Roroa."

".....Wan, yes?"

"For starters, the matter regarding the dispatching of the troops, the Silver Lion Earl may have said that, but I believe that you did well. I did feel like there were fewer incidents than what I had originally expected while I was assisting the Silver Lion Earl with her work here in the office."

".....Ah....."

Roroa looked up at me hesitantly. I ignored the displeased grunt from the Silver Lion Earl behind me and adjusted my glasses.

"And the fact that you didn't ask me for help..... in that regard, I understand your reasoning. However, not so much when you said that you couldn't trust someone without prior judgment. Not because the Silver Lion Earl trusts me and not because the Earl had bestowed upon me the title of squire. Look at me with your eyes."

".....Wan."

"I'll help you. Let's investigate together."

"Understood, wan."

Roroa nodded. I returned her nod.

"In any case, that's fine. Did you roughly investigate everything? Ariya had kicked one of the two people in the face. Did no one have an injury on their face?"

"Wan. Injuries can be healed with medicine or magic, wan."

That's why I had excluded that from the start."

Well, even I, who had ripped out a piece of his own flesh earlier, was perfectly healed now. I guess this was something that's inconvenient when in a world with magic.

"How about a background check on the people within the castle?"

"Of course, I went through those, but, wan. Since we were certain within the line which we could confirm....."

"Within the line which you could confirm?"

"That's....."

Roroa glanced at the Silver Lion Earl. The Silver Lion Earl let out a sigh.

"There was a time when I had fired a lot of the people who were working in this castle all at once."

I feel like I've heard about that from Sii before. If I were to give this response, then I'll probably receive an 'Ah, then I guess you can hear the rest from Mikatni's adopted daughter' in reply.

Regardless, even if I were to receive that response.

"I feel like I've heard about that from Sii before."

"Ah, then I guess you can hear the rest from Mikatni's adopted daughter."

As I had predicted, the Silver Lion Earl gave that retort. However, she soon opened her eyes wide.

"Your Excellency....."

Sii had gotten down to her knees and was bowing her head.

If she tried to avoid it, then the issue will continue to remain in that spot. The thing which must be made clear will change. I had informed Sii about this fact and if this were to eventually ever happen in the future, then I told her to actively make an appeal for her own existence and lower her head. Although the process of persuading her wasn't easy, Sii was a good girl.

Furthermore, since the Silver Lion Earl---was the Silver Lion Earl as well.

The Silver Lion Earl, who was staring at my blood smeared on Sii's sleeves, pressed her hand against her forehead.

“.....Damn it. I hired a lot of orphans. I also bought some slaves. Publicly, I had hired them in order to relieve the poor, but my real reason was because I wanted to pick them out myself. You know, it's like buying fruits from the fruits and vegetable section of a supermarket. Since it's an apple that you chose yourself, it feels safe. It's that sort of feeling, you know? Cases like Mikatni's adopted daughter is an exception among exceptions.”

Is she using a supermarket as a comparison? Pass. The fact that they were in the fruits and vegetable section must mean that no matter how many there were, they went through the hands of the supermarket people at least once. Pass. People aren't apples. Pass. Everyone should know, so she should be regretting it now.

Conclusion.

“So you're saying that there are maids who you have no information on in regard to what they were doing prior to working here?”

“YesYesYes. At that time, this young lady was severely experiencing some la petite mort, chuunibyou symptoms, and a blackening phase. It's refreshing to finally be able to get this off of my chest. Do you have any more questions? Ask away. I'll answer them all while I'm at it.”

“If that’s the case, then Earl, it’s about your way of speech in this world’s lang---.”

“I’ll kill you.”

Mm.

“I’ll kill you, Mr. Yujin. I’m saying, that I’ll reaaaaally kill you. If you understand, then you mustn’t flap your lips about this topic even slightly, okay? Do you understand?”

The retorting Silver Lion Earl’s face was red, something which rarely ever happened.

As I thought, I shouldn’t have made a rebuttal. But for me to not make a rebuttal…… she’s the one who told me to ask anything…….

No. Like I said, this wasn’t the time for this.

I turned towards Roroa.

“So you’re currently at a stalemate?”

“……Yes, that is correct.”

“Then that means nothing will come up even if you were given more time. The same would also apply if more personnel were assigned to this case.”

Ryungste, who was just listening to us the entire time, cleared his throat.

“Ehem! Her Excellency the Earl’s…… Sir Otherworlder. I feel as if that conclusion is a bit hasty. My guards are competent. They are talented enough for me to believe in all of them after all. Uh, if you give us more time, then.”

Although he was probably silent until now because he couldn’t find an opportunity to speak, it was needless to say that this timing and place were absolutely the worst for him right now. The Silver Lion

Earl raised one eye.

“Oho. How much additional time do you require?”

“Uh, that’s.”

“1 week? 10 days? Would that much be enough? Would you then be able to offer me bullshit that has a little more value than the nonsense that you had offered me today?”

“Y-Your Excellency. Investigations are, uh, water can sometimes be sluiced out of a paddy all at once, but if that water isn’t sluiced, then, it will stay unsluiced, since it’s something like that, I believe that with my professional opinion.”

Sweat was covering Ryungste’s wrinkled forehead. Although it seemed to be referred to as a synonym for Hell nowadays, as a person who was born from a country that was once called the country of courteous people in the East, Korea, this was an elder abuse that I couldn’t turn a blind eye towards.

“Earl, that’s enough.” I cast a side-glance at the Silver Lion Earl who then clicked her tongue before I shifted to speaking in this world’s language and continued. **“There’s a chance that a sudden turning point will come our way. However, that’s literally something that has to come our way. An example would be another new assault occurring.”**

“Wow. A new assault, is it? That’s an occurrence that this young lady could never hope for. Due to the fact that 4 years have passed, I feel like the cooldown on my mass firing ability has ended. If something like that happens one more time, then starting from the absolutely useless heads of the executives of the guards---.”

“Earl, that’s enough.” I cast a side-glance at the Silver Lion Earl who then clicked her tongue before I shifted to speaking in this world’s language and continued. **“An additional variable is**

required. Instead of waiting, we'll be the ones to inject a variable. Since the investigation done by the guards wasn't enough, we'll use something outside of that. Although the magical investigation that that person called Sophna was assumed to be doing would be a good example, since it's uncertain whether they're actually doing it or not and since no promises were made, Earl."

"Speak."

"What happens if you simplify the assault that happened on me and Sii?"

"They dared to place their dirty feet in this young lady's castle and carelessly extended their hands towards this young lady's possession and---."

"If you simplify it more?"

"A mysterious group of muggers. Why does this matter?"

"You," I started to speak in Korean. "I'm referring to how you have a connection with the alliance of those very groups of muggers."

The Silver Lion Earl furrowed her brow. She soon opened her eyes wide.

While watching the comprehension spread across her face, I carried on.

"A snake would know best about the path of a snake. It's a scene that often occurs in those crime-investigation type shows and novels, isn't it?"

"Mr. Yujin~~!"

A broad smile appeared on the Silver Lion Earl's lips. She abruptly pulled me into a hug and pounded her head against my shoulder as if she were headbutting me.

“Ah hah ha, Mr. Yujin! Mr. Yujin! You adorable little thing! You’re like a bag of tricks!”

“Earl, everyone’s watching.”

“Aang? So what? Let them waatch, I’m busy hugging you a bit! Ah hah ha, that’s right! The Black Dragon Street! We’ll be able to get new information if we ask the Black Dragon Street!”

“Yeah, send Zia. She seems busy, but she can spare some time, can’t she? I came out of the basement as well and roughly learned how to speak in this world’s language so I could go together…….”

“No! There’s a simpler method.” While going through the motions of digging through the pocket of her skirt, the Silver Lion Earl switched to speaking in this world’s language. **“Everyone, especially you, Dog Knight of Justice. Unsheathed state. Well, if that isn’t enough, then I’ll call for Zia as well so don’t worry.”**

The item that the Silver Lion Earl pulled out of her pocket was a small ring. It was made out of a material that was similar to silver and there was a goat-like insignia engraved on the inner side of the ring.

Flickering.

At the same moment as when the Silver Lion Earl’s nail on the pinky of her right hand was dyed black, a single man appeared in the room.

A man who had grown a beard in the shape of a line that stretched from the bottom of his lip to his chin. He was approximately in his thirties. The hair that he had tied firmly behind the back of his head was a ponytail that reached all the way down to his knees. He had eyes that were yellow like the moon. The cracks in his pupils were gray. Although his overall appearance was tidy, his attire that was made from leather looked as if it belonged to that of an outlaw and his eyes with raised corners were that of a thief.

With her hands on her hips, the Silver Lion Earl spoke.

“Welcome, Mr. Borg Edentras.”

I had heard that name before.

The alliance of pimps and criminals that committed all sorts of illegal activities, thievery, and muggings. One of the 12 factions of the world, ‘Black Dragon Street’. The branch manager of the City of Confinement, Borg Edentras hesitantly took a step back.



Everyone in the room instinctively entered a battle stance. Especially Roroa, who had entered her ‘unsheathed state’---a transformation unique to the Saber-Fangs, as the Silver Lion Earl had ordered. She was in a monster-like state that was completely different from her previous form as a small girl.

“Your Excellency! What is this!?”

With a husky voice that suited her transformed state, Roroa growled. The Silver Lion Earl made a peace sign with her fingers.

“What do you mean what is this? I summoned Mr. Borg.”

That response wasn’t able to relieve Roroa’s anxiety. Honestly, that was the same for me as well. The scene of the lord of a city making an exchange with the top honcho of the group of delinquents that live in that same city, was it fine to show this to other people? It may be fine for Sii, Ariya, and myself, but even the guards? The Silver Lion Earl probably didn’t do this without any prior thought.....

.....Right?

Around the time when I looked at the Earl with doubtful eyes, it seemed Borg had grasped the situation. Of course, if he weren’t able

to do something like that, then it would have been impossible for him to stand in that position. With movements that felt more similar to that of a snake than it did a scorpion, he examined the people who were gathered here in the office and spoke towards the Silver Lion Earl.

“Why have I been summoned?”

“Those are quite strange words. This young lady is the lord of this Water Dragon City. For the time being, Mr. Borg, you are living in this city. Is there a problem if this young lady, the lord, were to summon you?”

“If you need me, then you could have just called me while going through the proper procedures!”

“It seems you must have forgotten that I hate wasting time. Putting opinions aside, let’s get to the main point.”

“Opinions? This is an important---.”

“Put aside your side talk.” The Silver Lion Earl tilted her head.
“Let’s get to the main point.”

Borg wavered. Similar to how I had made a guess and gave Zia a piece of advice according to that guess a while back, he was weak towards the people whom he considered to be stronger than himself. Although he was gnashing his teeth, that was just a struggle that came from his impatience.

“.....What do you mean by the main point?”

“Mr. Borg, you didn’t keep your promise.”

“Promise? What promise?”

“Are you going to make me say it myself?”

The Silver Lion Earl’s voice was low. Borg looked around the room

once more before holding his breath.

“Uh, if it’s about the previous incident, then I recall that I had handled it properly…….”

“You’re aware that I’m not referring to that, are you not?”

Sweat started to cover Borg’s forehead.

“Uh, Lord. Please understand. I am not an omnipotent man. I am merely…….”

“You’re merely a branch manager of the Black Dragon Street, right? However, thanks to that, there should be things that you are capable of doing.” The Silver Lion Earl grinned while showing her teeth. **“Like regulating the intruders who dared to cause a ruckus while inside of this young lady’s castle!”**

Borg froze completely.

“Intruders?”

“Mask-wearing pieces of trash ran amuck. Several of my employees who work in this castle were nearly injured.”

Borg looked around the room for the third time. He spoke with a doubtful expression.

“Mm, I’m asking just in case, but…… where is the Azure Rose Knight right now?”

“Zia? She’s most likely playing with her teacher at the arena right now. She probably has the misconception that she’s doing her job by playing around like that. That’s something which Zia has always done. But why are you asking this young lady this? This young lady thought that your information network---in other words, this young lady thought that the information network of the Black Dragon Street was better than this.”

Realization spread across Borg's face and washed away his fear.

Since I had been watching him carefully, I had a rough grasp of what was going through his mind the moment he was summoned and to this very moment. He was summoned by the Silver Lion Earl but Zia was nowhere in sight. He must have thought that Zia's previous acts of betrayal were revealed, so after she was purged, he had been dragged here in order to be tortured next. However, he had just now realized that that was a misunderstanding. If I were to say it in this world's terminology, then it was a 10 out of 12 chance that this was the case. As expected, Borg stopped sweating and spoke.

“Mm, well. I need to narrow my focus somewhat and concentrate…… So pieces of trash wearing masks, was it?”

“That is correct. Mr. Yujin---describe the mask to him.”

“No need. As Your Lordship has said, the information network of the Black Dragon Street is outstanding. Narrow my focus and concentrate. As I have said. I already have a grasp on the assault incident that had occurred within the castle.”

Since he had regained his composure, he was behaving in a swaying attitude. The Silver Lion Earl made it clear that she didn't like that attitude of his.

“So you're boldly blabbering that you had planted spies in this castle.”

“Mm, I am aware that Your Lordship wishes to make an area clear of rogues. I am also aware of your obsession towards arms.” Borg fixed his behavior and glanced at Ariya and Sii. **“However, that is impossible. ‘Anyone can be a Black Dragon, and the Black Dragon is everyone.’ Your Lordship is aware of this phrase, right?”**

“Well, whatever. Regardless of that shabby slogan, even this young lady doesn't have enough leisure to take her time

to do something that's impossible. Returning back to the promise that I had first mentioned, this young lady clearly made a declaration to you in the past. Do not excessively run amuck, manage your people with certainty, do not allow other pieces of trash to take root here, and by doing these things, this young lady had promised that her guards---including these two executives here---will tacitly allow the existence of your peerless thieves, assassins, and other pieces of trash like yourself. Do you remember?"

Borg's expression went rigid.

What's this?

It was a stiffness that stuck out so much that it made one automatically question it. If his slight change of behavior and expression earlier could only be noticed by me, then this just now was something that was large enough to be noticed by anyone. Ryungste, Roroa, Sii, Ariya, and even the Silver Lion Earl, they had all noticed the unrest that had appeared on Borg's face and were gazing at him quizzically.

Borg muttered.

"It's been a long time since I last heard that."

The Silver Lion Earl's expression went rigid this time.

As expected, this was a bit too large to miss.

A short silence.

The Silver Lion Earl turned her gaze away.

".....Regardless of how much time has passed, the promise is still effective. As I had promised, this young lady did not mess with your group even after I had become the lord."

"That's a bit different from what I remember. Riol

Naricpitor was once a member of the Black Dragon Street.”

“That goes under the category of having excessively run amuck.”

“That, I can’t deny.”

“Yes. If you exclude those exceptions, then this young lady has done her utmost to keep that promise. However, it seems that you didn’t intend to keep that promise from the very beginning.”

“That is not so.” Borg cleared his throat and brushed his beard that had been grown out into a single line. “I had already done an investigation on those fellows. They are called Ex’ parte(Translating…… Sky Eaters?).”

“What a grandiose name.”

“Like how these sorts of groups always are, the things they do are pathetic. They are an organization that specializes in ‘covert assaults’.”

“Covert assaults? Not assassinations?”

“They say the organization doesn’t take lives. Instead, they’re an organization that does everything outside of that which can be considered as harmful. For example, they castrated the young master of a certain noble household, tore the face off of a certain noblewoman, and made the esteemed daughter of a certain noble become addicted to drugs---an organization that specializes in ‘leaving scars’. It seems they despise nobles a fair amount.”

“Ah ha, I can understand their name, then.”

“They aren’t a part of the Black Dragon Street. They’re an up-and-coming organization. Recently, it seems they’ve been establishing their influence in the palatinates of the Snake,

Cat, and Pig.”

“Hm. I don’t understand why those fellows, who seemed to be having so much fun in the frontier, would set foot here.”

“This place is a frontier, too. Every palatinate is.”

“Mm, Mr. Borg. That isn’t important, Mr. Borg. So, do you know where they are?”

Borg opened both of his hands.

“From this point forth, I’ll require an information fee.”

“Should I remind you about the promise?”

“Honestly, I only told Your Lordship this much for free because of that very promise. It’s highly debatable whether I’d have done so or not if that weren’t the case.”

Borg spoke as if he were grumbling. The Silver Lion Earl, who was staring at him for a while, turned to look at me.

I---this time---took a step forward.

“If they don’t belong to the Black Dragon Street, then doesn’t that mean you’ll have to dispute over your business areas?”

Borg examined me meticulously.

“Hm…… you’re that.”

If he was capable enough to obtain information about the assault, then he would obviously have information about me as well. The Earl probably didn’t particularly try to hide me either.

Right when I was about to nod, Borg continued to speak.

“The masochistic otherworlder.”

I shook my head.

“No.”

“What are you saying no to?”

“I’m not a masochist, but I am indeed an otherworlder.”

“Hm, there’s something that you should know, masochist, but I see a lot of masochists in my line of work. In other words, that means I can recognize a masochist the moment I see them. So when I look at you, you being a masochist is right.”

“That isn’t so. Let’s return back to the main topic.”

“Well, what you said is right. My promise with Her Lordship…… well, I have to keep that as well, but more than that, it’s true that even the Black Dragon Street can’t forgive that sort of indecent organization. The phrase ‘Anyone can be a Black Dragon, and a Black Dragon is everyone’ also means that they shouldn’t have any other choice than the Black Dragon. However, mate, be that as it may, if you’re trying to say something like ‘Since it’s something you enjoy and you’re going to do it anyway, then that must mean you don’t need money’ then you better be careful. Especially if you’re in front of a member of the Black Dragon Street. For what purpose do you think we decided to be a part of the Black Dragon in the first place?”

A small salary for working passionately creates thieves. This world was no different either, it seems.

I turned towards the Silver Lion Earl and shrugged. The Earl spoke.

“Are you finished?”

“It was such a sound argument that I can’t refute anything.”

“Are you joking, Mr. Yujin? Whenever I say anything, you’d do all sorts of things like bite as if you were a dog and tear off your own flesh, but you’re telling me that you’ll easily accept that thief’s nonsense? This is something that’ll require punishm---.”

“Now that I think about it, Earl, didn’t you say that you’ll give me a salary? It’s been nearly a month and a half since I got---.”

“Mr. Borg. How much do you want?”

“If we go according to the average fee of the Black Dragon Street, then 5000 vita per question…… No, wait. Since I, the branch manager, had come here personally, I’ll have to receive more. 10000 vita.”

“Since the lord was the one to receive you, let’s exclude that. 3000.”

“Let’s just stick to 5000. Cash.”

“I’ll give it to you by check. If this young lady thinks about it, this is something that’s fine to use a check on.”

“But cash is more convenient…….”

Borg muttered to himself and sat down. It felt as if I were looking at an owner of a restaurant who had started to worry about the additional charge that was going to go to the credit card company the moment a get-together customer told the owner that their group was going to pay for their meal with their business credit card……rather than it feeling like it did, the thing that had just occurred was probably exactly that.

The Silver Lion Earl looked at me once more.

“5000 vita per question. Ask well.”

“How much is 5000 vita?”

When I said that I had a feel for this world's economy, I actually meant the price of a single well-made sword. It was apparently a price that I could afford with 1 month worth of my pay as a squire. Regardless, the Silver Lion Earl obviously had her own standards.

“Huu~? Why haven't you gotten a hold of how pricing works in this world while you've been here? It's about the price of a single pair of my shoes.”

“But you don't wear shoes.”

“I wear it very rarely, is that a problem?”

Later on, I'm going to have to ask her about her sense of economy. I turned back towards Borg. Borg, who had been watching the Earl and I converse with one another with interest in his eyes, straightened his posture.

Wait. Think about it for a bit. Instead of repeating the same words like I'd normally do, I had to say this all in a single complex sentence.

“Tell us where those so-called Sky Eaters, the specific group of people who had entered this castle, assaulted both Sii and I, and were fought off by Ariya, are currently located in this Water Dragon City.”

Borg frowned. If I were to ask something along the lines of ‘Where are they?’, then I'd probably get ‘I'm not sure who they're supposed to be, but if it's those guys, then they're probably over there’ in response. If I just said ‘Sky Eaters’, then a response like ‘I said it before, but you'll probably be able to find them in places like the palatinates of the Snake, Cat, or the Pig’, would probably be returned to me. Although I doubt he'd actually try to give only these sorts of responses and leave after having just taken the money, it was apparent that the fact I gave him such a precise question had ruined his mood.

“I am aware that around two weeks ago, two people had entered this city. Since they are still a new organization, it can't be helped that their movements stick out. However,

after that, they had hidden their whereabouts. After hearing about the attack that happened within the castle, I started my investigation once more but I wasn't able to get a hold of their precise location yet. I'll contact you the moment I find out."

"Then I can give you the money at that time."

"Your Excellency, have you heard of initial fees?"

"The sweat that flows during the process of labor is the pay for the labor of sublimity.' Rixco Chidorea."

"People like that are the ones who made the Black Dragon Street."

I nodded to her from the side to show her that I agreed with him.



"Next time, please do not call me here like this. Whether Your Lordship visits me yourself, sends an envoy, or sends an invitation, are there not many other methods to bring me here?"

Borg complained. After the Silver Lion Earl had canceled his summon and sent him back, she turned to glance at the people who were left in the room.

"Everyone. Bury the conversation that occurred just now and anything about the individual who was here deep in your chests and do not disclose it to anyone. Especially you, Miss Dog Knight of Justice. Do not flap your mouth towards that Orange Hawk Prince. Ryungste, you as well. Do not disclose this information to even that granddaughter of yours who you adore so much. Do you understand?"

“Yes, I will keep my lips sealed, Your Excellency.”

“I shall bear it in mind, wan, Your Excellency.”

The two stood at attention as they responded. The Silver Lion Earl nodded and gazed at Sii, Ariya, and myself once before shrugging.

“I shouldn’t have a particular need to also say this to Miss Ariya or Mr. Yujin. Now then, let’s get to the point---.”

“M-Me too…….” Sii strenuously opened her mouth. **“I, won’t tell anyone as well, Your Excellency.”**

The Silver Lion Earl looked at Sii while raising her brow. Sii endured that gaze with an expression that appeared as if her heart were being grasped. The Silver Lion Earl contemplated on whether she should ignore her or give her a response before deciding to choose the latter.

“In the first place, do you even have anyone to talk to, Mikatni’s adopted daughter?”

Although it was a Silver Lion Earl-like response, she soon raised her brow again. Sii had giggled with a perseverance that was not Sii-like.

“Ehehe…… Mm~~ Your Excellency, is right about that.”

And then the Silver Lion Earl---was once more, the Silver Lion Earl.

“……Do as you wish. In any case, back to the point. Ryungste, Roroa. Continue the investigation. Use more manpower as well. No, Miss Dog Knight of Justice. I know what you’re trying to say. I’m giving you this order while aware of that. Although I may have said it a bit harshly earlier, in summary of what you wanted to say, in the end, you wanted to put more effort into protecting more of the citizens, right? Similar to that of a certain sect within the religious body of Gainu Warmon, the God of Equality, which

you are affiliated to. However, this city is not a free city. There may be community councils, but there are no city councils, This young lady rules this city, and there is that much weight on this young lady's shoulders as well. That center must not tremble. That's the rule of a lord's city. Any group that believes that they'll be safe even if they go against those regulations are destined to fall. Moreover, the chaos that occurs during the process of that fall is destined to envelop those very citizens who you wished to cherish. Bear this fact in mind, understood?"

".....Understood, Your Excellency, wan."

"Good. Next, Mr. Yujin."

"Yes, Earl?"

"Help out the guards."

"I will."

I nodded.

Footnotes

1. [\[↑\]](#) This next part is a bit confusing. The Earl is going on about something, but it isn't really clear what she's exactly talking about, or rather, what the 'livestock' is referring to. Also, she's talking in a rather crazy way, so pardon any weird grammar.



There's a time where I had these sorts of hopes.

There's a chance that it was because I didn't try hard enough. There's a chance that everything could have changed if I had done a bit better. There's a chance that I wouldn't be bullied anymore. There's a chance that my uncle and aunt wouldn't fight anymore. There's a chance that Miyeong wouldn't hate me. Like so, there's a chance that we could have become a decent family one day. If endeavored. If I just worked hard enough.

There's a time where I had these sorts of hopes.

There's a chance that maybe, one day, all of this misfortune will be over. There's a chance that my father could one day suddenly come back alive. There's a chance that I could find a bag with a hundred million won inside of it while on a walk. There's a chance that Chanmi could miraculously receive a revelation and apologize for everything wrong she had done to me. There's a chance that Miyeong could one day stand in front of Chanmi's gang and declare that 'I won't let you harass my older cousin anymore'. If I'm fortunate. If there is a day that fortune comes to me.

With an unparalleled righteous mind, if a transfer student, who isn't hindered by any sorts of obstacles, were to one day arrive.

There's a time where I had these sorts of irresponsible hopes.



Suppressing your ability to vent your emotions is a painful thing to do. Even more so if that emotion is anger.

No matter how much profit you're able to obtain in the long-run by suppressing your emotions, no matter how much you're able to calculate it, it will not lessen your pain. Even more so if you're trying to appeal yourself and laugh while in front of a person who's trying to

ignore your existence. That is as painful for the person as it is difficult for anyone to imagine that person, who'd normally never do such a thing, would actually do it. Since I was well aware of this fact, I decided to praise Sii.

“Miss Sii, you did very well earlier.”

“Yujin, we got her weakness! If it's the Black Dragon Street, then it's those thieves. How could she call those sort of people here and share a secret conversation with them!? We should quickly spread this and make Her Excellency…….”

I praised her too soon. I glanced around our surroundings---we were in Sii's room along with Ariya---checked our state of security, and spoke.

“Please calm down. Although I had a similar thought when she had summoned Borg, no matter how much I think about it, this isn't a big case. It can neither be used to threaten nor can it be used to make an exchange with her.”

“Mm~~ is that the case? But Her Excellency said to keep it a secret.”

“Since it can become ever so slightly bothersome. To the Earl, it'd be to the degree of being bitten by a bug. Compared to that, if news about this were to spread, then, although we would also be bitten by that same bug, that bug would most likely be similar to a beetle that's the size of a fist. She isn't a person who would forgive anyone that tries to maliciously start a fight with her authority.”

“But Yujin always talks as if you're trying to provoke her. You even talk informally. Honestly, whenever I watch you do that, my heart pounds.”

“There's a trick.” I shifted to speaking in this world's language.
“Rather than that, the thing that's more important right now is the investigation on these Sky Eaters---Gongshik(空蝕, Burst Irradiator)”

As you can tell by the chuunibyō style Chinese characters name and the English name, this was a name that the Silver Lion Earl had made but it suited them rather well. Sii made an audible thinking sound.

“Her Excellency said to help the guards…… are you planning to go now?”

“Yes. Thanks to the Earl, I was also able to gather the missing puzzle pieces.”

“Puzzle?”

“I will explain it soon. Wait a moment. Let me prepare a bit.”

I spoke while looking at my iPad. Sii leaned her head towards me from the side and tilted her head.

“What do you mean by prepare…… ah, the character sheets. Are you renewing them?”

“Yes. We also met Borg this time. These sorts of things can’t be delayed and must be done as soon as possible. I’m nearly done…… Okay. Now then, look at this.”

I showed the screen that had appeared on the iPad to Sii.

“……? Weird lines?”

“It’s a spectrogram.” I continued after switching to this world’s language. **“Everyone has a different voice, right? That’s because the respective shape of everyone’s vocal chords is different. In other words, we can analyze a voice and make an assumption on who the owner of that voice is. This is one of the technologies from my world.”**

“Mm~~ that’s amazing.”

Sii stared at the screen with eyes filled to the brim with curiosity. Ariya also glanced slightly at the iPad screen.

“To analyze a voice and change it into a form that can be visibly seen. How interesting. So, whose voice are we looking at now?”

“Gongshik. The voice of the masked maid who was standing in the front.”

Ariya was slightly startled, but Sii was extremely startled.

“Eck!? W-Where? How!?”

“Do you think there would be no hidden cameras in the places we reside in?”

Silence.

“Then, also…… the thing…… I, said to Yujin…… last time?”

“What thing?”

“Related to the prince…… that…… thing. A video.”

“I have it.”

Sii became red and started to hit my shoulder.

“Mm~! Uu~~! Uuuuuuu~~!!”

“That hurts.”

“But! Buuut……!”

I understood her feelings, but it really did hurt. Sii's strength was abnormally powerful. Nevertheless, if I said something like 'Should I delete it?', then my face will probably be blown away instead of my shoulder. That's why I stayed still. Honestly, a person who ends up filming a girl's confession and decides to preserve the video deserves to

be hit.

Fortunately, Ariya had grabbed Sii's wrist before my shoulder could become dislocated.

"I don't know what's the matter, but calm down. It seems something related to you must have been recorded, but don't you only say embarrassing things anyway?"

"No, I don't! And even if I did! I'm! Also a girl!"

"Fair Grace, does that mean you can find out who the person is with just a voice analysis?"

"Don't ignore me~!"

Sii clung onto Ariya with a tearful face and shook her. I nodded.

"Yeah. As long as I have enough samples, I can find out whether they're the culprit or not with a 100% accuracy."

Those words were far from the truth. Even a spectrogram that had been analyzed at the National Institute of Scientific Investigation, while using the greatest equipment in the nation and by the best researchers, would still end up being nothing more than circumstantial evidence. You can't prosecute someone with just this and it won't be selected as formal evidence even in the court of law. Let alone, even if I could make spectrograms with this shoddy application, it's impossible for me to determine who the owner of that voice is with a 100% accuracy.

However---there was no need for me to tell these two this fact.

Especially now, there was no need for me to tell these two more.

"Is that so....."

Ariya fell into thought with her hand pressed against her mouth. Sii was then finally able to regain her composure and she puffed out her

chest.

“Then that means it’s over, right!? So who is it? Is it really a person from within the castle? A maid?”

“Not yet. I need to gather more samples in order to be certain. The maid in the back also didn’t utter even a single line.”

“Mm~~ I see. Then why are you looking at it right now?”

“I’m just confirming it. I’ll have to show this to the guards when I go to them after all.”

I spoke while packing up the iPad and some electronic pieces of equipment. Sii glanced at her arm that had once been cut off before looking at me hesitantly.

“Do you plan to go now? It’s already late into the night…….”

Since we had ended up in this situation while I was giving my routine report to the Earl, it was in the middle of the night now. I shrugged.

“Well, we can skip out on the maid work tomorrow with this. Miss Sii will be going along with me.”

“Eck!? B-But, she didn’t say anything about me…….”

“Miss Sii is also one of the people who was assaulted and the Earl herself said that this was important, so there is a good cause. I’ve said it before, but I won’t leave you by yourself until that arm is completely healed.”

“Yujin…….”

Sii’s face became dyed red. Ariya shut an eye.

“The fact that you had said all of that in this world’s

language must mean that I'll be going along with you."

"Yup. You're related to the incident as well and you're also our escort. We'll be in your care."

"That is fine by me, however, Fair Grace, if you intend to go to the guards right this instant, may I go a bit later? I have something to say to Alshi....."

"Sure. It's late so you can get some rest today. I should be considerate to the couple."

Ariya's face became scarlet. The angle which she averted her gaze was 33 degrees to the side.

Sii puffed out her cheeks.

"In any case, I don't understand. Ariya, I'm saying this just in case, but if you lay a single finger on me, then I'll scream."

Ariya tilted her head at a 15 degrees angle.

"You must be insane, Sii. Even if we were the only two girls left in this world, no, in all 12 worlds, I have absolutely no intentions whatsoever to do anything that has sexual undertones towards you. If anything, you're the one who tried to play with fire by ordering me to do something like lick your feet. Therefore, never again stick that white foot of yours towards me. Or I'll make it so that you do scream."

"Yujin! Order Ariya to lick my white toes! Right this instant!"

"Let us go. Miss Sii, lead the way to the guards quarters. Ariya, we'll see you later."

"Understood."

Ariya Orgit responded. Sii followed after me with puffed out cheeks.



There were two lines that stretched out with the Silver Lion Castle at their center. The waterway and the rampart. Among the two, while the rampart played the role as a gatekeeper that protected the City of Confinement from foreign enemies, it also played the role as a prison guard that prevented the citizens from moving around freely outside of the city. This job as a prison guard also had the role of dividing the internal structure of the city. From the inner rampart that encircled the Silver Lion Castle, a rampart stretched out and connected with the outer rampart that encircled the entire City of Confinement, dividing the city like a cheesecake.

The guards of the City of Confinement were monopolizing this rampart, that was stretched out like a spiderweb, as a movement route. With that reason, and also with the archaic reason of protecting the lord of the city, their headquarters had to be in the Star Tower of the Silver Lion Castle. Furthermore, they were also protecting the drying area and the generator that I had brought.

“Cres! Is the next shift’s crew not here yet!?”

“There are still 5 hours left, sir!”

“Superior Agripa, there’s a report that a fight has started in the business area…….”

“Damn it, again? Hey, didn’t we go there an hour ago? And yet they’re fighting again?”

Just as Roroa had said, even though it was late into the night, the administrative office of the guards’ headquarters was no different to a war zone. They must have received a prior notice since the moment the guards saw us, they gestured towards where the vice-captain’s room was. I carefully observed the fact that the majority of the guards were young.

“Tsk, at any rate, it’s become weird. Even if a dog has become the assistant commissioner…….”

“You idiot, don’t say that when others can hear you.”

I also listened in on these sorts of complaints.

When we entered the vice-captain’s room, we were able to see Ryungste resting his upper body on his desk while his arms were wrapped around his head.

“Mm? Ah, you are…… Erse, no, you’re Sir Mercè’s adopted daughter. And the person next to you is Her Excellency the Earl’s, uh…….”

“Please call me Yujin.”

“Speak comfortably. It’s rather discomfoting when the person who speaks informally with Her Excellency talks politely to someone like myself.”

I had no reason to decline.

“All right.”

“Ehem. Roroa is currently absent because she said that she had something to do, but she should be back soon. While we wait…… should I make the orderly brew up some tea?”

“I’ll accept that generosity.”

An orderly with a sassy face set down a cup of tea for everyone.

Only the sound of tea being sipped resonated throughout the vice-captain’s room for a while. Ryungste couldn’t endure it any longer and made a troubled face.

“Uhm, Sir Yujin. About this incident, I had, uh, completely entrusted it to Roroa…… We’ve also been completely busy recently. Of course, since I’m her superior, I’ve been

receiving the basic reports, but still, as I thought, if we're to precisely fulfill Her Excellency the Earl's orders, then I can't clumsily act as if I……."

"I understand. I'll talk to Roroa about it once she's here. Can you tell me a bit about her until then?"

Like how anyone would normally feel when the topic had changed to something which they can talk about well, Ryungste's tension settled down.

"She's a good girl. She's sincere and clever. Because of how pitifully tactless she is, this old man might end up passing on before his time, but……."

"As you said, it's probably like that because she's sincere."

"Haa, of course. She isn't malicious by a long shot. It's something that naturally happened when all she meant to do was work hard."

"But if she's the assistant commissioner, then that means she's directly below you, right? Despite that, I feel like she's rather young. Was she also able to move up in ranks quickly because of her sincerity? Or is it because she's a Saber-Fang so she only appears to be young but she's actually old?"

"It's because of her performance, her performance. Although almost every guard, excluding myself, are young fellows, Roroa is the most outstanding out of them all."

"It seems there are some jealous people as well."

Ryungste's face became slightly red.

"Ehem. There are some fellows who prejudice others just by looking at their race. Such shameful fellows. Even though when Sir Ahyeon was here……. Since they lack the skills, they look for whatever they can to bring her down. But it has

actually been calmer lately. Roroa excels a lot after all. Thanks to her, it's been easy for me as well....."

"She really must be talented. She received the title of knight from a prince, didn't she? That's impressive."

Ryungste became tense once more.

"Uh, mm..... that's, a bit. Of course, Sir Yujin must have heard about it from Her Excellency as well, and I also agree to it fully, but....."

"It's fine. Speak comfortably. I'm not trying to sound you out or anything."

"Mm, okay..... mm. It was a bit, honestly speaking, it's true that what she did was rash. She was undoubtedly serving as a guard of the Household of the Earl, and yet she accepted a noble title from another person. Even if it was from the Orange Hawk Prince, actually, especially so since he's just a suitor and not Her Excellency's fiance, she should be well aware of Her Excellency's personality, really....."

If even Ryungste thought along these lines, then that must mean that this was common sense in this world. Well, even with my own common sense, I understood that this was a case that would displease the Earl.

But, if that was the case, then.

"Let's say that Roroa is tactless. Why do you think the Orange Hawk....." Since he's a member of the royal family, it should be right to add an honorific. "Sir Orange Hawk Prince had bestowed upon her the title of knight? In your opinion."

"Huu, honestly, he most likely did it without much consideration. Last time he visited the Mage Tower, I heard that he gave some commoner girl an esteemed title. Just because he felt like it. Of course, that is his authority as the

Third Prince, and since that commoner girl was a member of the Mage Tower, it must mean that she was that talented. However, that sort of behavior, uhm, the weight of those titles. How should I say it…….”

“It makes them feel cheap?”

“Yes, if I were to say it in common words. That’s why I feel sorry for Roroa. If she intended to stand in line, then she should have chosen her spot better. She’s downright tactless. She really is a Saber-Fang…….”

“Is there a problem with my race?”

Ryungste hiccupped. We turned towards the door and saw Roroa standing there.

“Ah, you’re here Roroa. Ehem, no, well…… we were just talking back and forth and that sort of…….”

“……Wan.” Roroa shook her head. **“Vice-captain, it’s fine if you talk about me behind my back, but about my race…….”**

“Ah, I said we were just talking back and forth and that sort of popped up. I didn’t speak ill of it…… No, if anything, I was saying that the people who judged others by their race were shameful fellows…… In any case, about earlier, why did you persist so much while in front of Her Excellency? You could have just said I apologize, I’ll mend my ways. Just why are you trying to make this old man pass on before his time, hm?”

Towards the groaning sound that was unique to old people, Roroa sighed.

“Vice-captain, I had no intention to make you pass on before your time, wan. I was just…….”

“Right, you most likely did it for the people. That’s what

you do, right? That---uh, what was it called, the teaching of that religion of yours. Nevertheless, can you not only make an effort for the people but for me as well? Please, don't let my granddaughter grow up while not knowing the face of her own grandfather. Are you not able to show at least that much consideration? We've worked together for a long time now, haven't we?"

Roroo had her hand pressed against her forehead as she turned towards us.

"The guests are waiting, wan. I'll be taking my leave, wan."

"All right. No, wait. It would be better if I were the one to leave. I was already on my way out. I have to meet Sir Zaho from the House of Naricpitor and the chairman of the Skylight Wind. It's an important official business meeting. I plan to get off work while I'm there, so you can use the desk and chairs here however you wish."

Ryungste took out a hat and wore it firmly on his head before leaving the room. Roroo naturally closed the door to the vice-captain's room and sat on the chair which Ryungste had been sitting on just a second ago.

"I apologize for showing you such a shameful sight, wan. Yujin, and you as well, Miss Sii."

"No, it's fine!"

Sii uttered while shaking her head. Roroo laughed slightly before taking something out from her pocket and handing it to Sii. It was a button.

"Eh....."

Sii looked confused as she raised the button up. Roroo, who was about to turn towards me while smiling, saw the object and quickly became red.

“Mm? A-aah. Not that, this. This.”

Roroa took the button back and handed Sii a piece of candy. Sii gratefully received the candy and broke it in half with her strength before handing me a piece. I took both pieces, wrapped them up in some vinyl, and put them away.

“We’ll have snacks later.”

“Eck~~.”

Sii made a sullen face. Roroa scratched her disheveled hair.

“Auu…… In any case, I’m sorry, wan. I haven’t been able to sleep well lately.”

“Because of your work?”

“Yes…… I’ve been busy, with this and that. Wan. Thank you very much for taking my side back in the office.”

“Think nothing of it. All I did was say the truth, right? So, what should I help you with? I’m quite good at things like this. Last month was the real estate fraud done by the Fedchants and earlier this month was the false charges against Sii.”

Roroa blinked her eyes a couple of times before her ears pricked up.

“The Fedchant case! Were you the one who solved it!?”

“No, the Earl solved it. All I did was help. Similar to how I’m going to help you now.”

“Okay…… mm, all right. I understand, wan…… Surely, no, as I thought, it was like that.”

Roroa nodded her head a couple of times before looking at me with a face filled with awe.

“That’s reassuring, wan. Certainly, it’s true that we’re lacking in hands here, wan. If you possess an ability that’s capable enough to resolve, no, help resolve the Fedchant case, then, if anything, I should be the one asking you for help. I’m sorry for saying such arrogant things earlier in the office.”

“It’s fine. Let’s get to the main point.”

“Yes.Wan, but this case..... everything I said back in the office covers all of the investigations that we had done on our side so far......”

Roroo fell into deep thought.

“Then for starters, I’ll help you with something simple. Take off your coat.”

Silence.

“Wan!? E-Excuse me!? What!?”

“Yujin! What are you saying all of a sudden!?”

I answered them by taking out a sewing kit from my bag. Roroo, who was waving her arms, and Sii, who was shouting directly next to me, both calmed down once they saw it. However, instead of taking off her coat for me, Roroo wrapped her arms around her shoulders and gave me a sidelong look.

“Eh, but why all of a sudden, wan..... I did hear the rumors that you were good at sewing, but......”

“It helps me think.”

“Uhm, I’m asking just in case, but do you not have..... weird thoughts, wan?”

“Yujin probably doesn’t have those kinds of thoughts! Your

“races are also different…… Mm~~ it’s not possible! Though I can’t say it confidently!”

Sii shouted in an unconfident voice. Roroa cautiously took off her coat and passed it to me. She literally had the body type of a child. Teats that appeared like cherry blossom extracts which were dropped in milk. Except, there was fur growing in a single line from the center of her chest to her belly button.

“…….”

Once I stared at it, Roroa became flushed and covered that line of fur. Seeing that she didn’t cover her teats, did that mean her race considered that area of fur to be the more embarrassing portion of their bodies?. After removing the buttons that were in a zigzag, I spoke while sewing the buttons back on in a single straight line.

“This coat doesn’t get ruined, right? The clothes Kina wore were like that as well. These don’t seem to rip even after you girls transform.”

“Wan, it’s fine. It’s made from magic lining, wan. Even if it stretches out a bit, like this, only the buttons become misaligned.”

If that’s the case. I started to sew without hesitation.

“Last time, you said that it could possibly be 1 insider and 1 outsider, right?”

“Wan, yes.”

“What do you think now?”

“Wan…… Didnt that thief say that they entered the city 2 weeks ago? Therefore, I think that they’re both outsiders.”

“If that’s the case, then how did they get their hands on the maid uniforms? I’m not sure about any of the

undergarments, but if articles of clothing were to disappear, then a commotion would have occurred among the maids.”

“No reports were filed to the guards yet. Did that sort of ruckus not happen among the maids?”

“It didn’t.”

“Wan. That means they either copied the uniform or they may have stolen it from the House of Naricpitor, the family that provides the castle with these clothes. The garment cutter could have also been bribed……. I’ll have to confirm this later.”

“It seems those assailants really put their efforts into this.”

“Exactly. Wan. Moreover, the fact that an organization that works this hard was hired means that their employer must have put in that much effort on their side as well, wan. Yujin. Have you perhaps done something that made you earn someone’s grudge, wan?”

“I’ve done a lot. Some dog bone from who knows what world is acting arrogantly next to the lord of the city. Furthermore, Sii is being bullied by the other maids. Like that, there are many things that make us receive the enmity of other people. There’s probably no one that likes us.”

“Mm, and Miss Ariya……?”

“We have a bit of a connection.”

“Is that so…… Mm, I see…….”

Once more, Roroa appeared as if she were understanding something on her own. I spoke.

“What about you? Did something happen between you and Ariya?”

Roroo showed a perplexed face.

“Wan…… nothing in particular. There was a time that Ariya stole…… and I was the one who caught her, wan.”

I had predicted that this was the case and once I found out that this girl was Kina's sister, I had a near certain feeling.

However, I reacted to her as if I had never entertained that possibility before in my head.

“Heeh, you did?”

“Yes…… Did you not know?”

“Although I heard that Ariya had done such a thing, I didn't know which guard had caught her. You did something tremendous.”

“……I'm curious as to what you mean by tremendous.”

“You captured your little sister's colleague, right? Normally, people wouldn't be able to do that sort of thing.”

Roroo made a complicated face.

“Even if she weren't my little sister's colleague, to us guards, all of the maids are like our little sisters, wan. The superiors you can see if you go up the system are like that as well, wan. Moreover---.”

“She's the daughter of your old superior.”

Silence.

“Yes--- that's right, wan.”

“Did you not think that Ariya would feel betrayed? It's already sad that she's working as a maid since her household had fallen apart, but if the person who was once her father's

subordinate was the one to catch her. Moreover, catch her for something she had to do because her mother was sick.”

“Someone has to abide by the rules, wan.”

It was a low but firm voice. Similar to how she didn't back down when she declared that it was thanks to Ahyeon that she was able to wear her guard uniform while also standing before the Silver Lion Earl. I could tell that this guard girl, who resembled a dog, had a talent that was difficult to find anywhere else.

I pushed the topic a bit further.

“Of course, someone has to abide by the rules. But there are people who believe that they don't have to be the ones to abide by them. Additionally, those very people aren't doing that because they actually disrespect law and order, but because they're worried that by doing so, it'll hurt the people around them. Have you never worried about whether your little sister would end up being bullied or not by the other maids?”

“This must be the same in your world as well. Theoretically speaking, if something I did brings harm to my little sister, then it wouldn't be right. Wan. She'd normally be adored so there was a time that I believed it would be okay, wan. I had also thought that by neglecting it, it would bring even more harm. In the end, the reason why Kina was able to avoid being harassed was largely thanks to Mari's assistance.”

That Mari. So you're telling me that she's nice to anyone that isn't Sii?

Shall I push her a little more?

“If you're so thorough when it comes to the notion of law and order, then you should have stopped the Earl earlier this month. Sii was framed and had her arm cut off, you know?”

Sii lowered her head. Roroa looked as if she were ashamed.

“That incident--- nothing, could have been done about it, wan. Even if we were to do this or that, Her Excellency the Earl has the full authority of this city. Even us guards can’t do much when it comes to a political matter of that altitude…… but Her Excellency normally sticks to the rules…….”

“Sorry, that was rude of me. That’s right, there are probably things that cannot be helped. But seeing that you referred to it as a political matter, you must be aware of Sii’s situation.”

“Yes…… I said it before, but Abria is my friend, wan. That’s why I know. Albeit, there’s nothing in particular which I can do even if I am aware of it, and I can’t carelessly talk about it either……. I also firmly learned that nothing good can come from awkwardly sticking your head into politics back during the knight title incident, wan.”

There was self-deprecation mixed into those words. I didn’t say anything.

That seemed to have been the correct response. Roroa flapped her ears.

“I think I know why you’re asking me this, wan. Do you think you’ve become a target because of Miss Sii’s situation, wan?”

As I expected, her head worked quickly.

“I just thought it’d be a good idea to put that up in the line of possibilities. Those Gongshik fellows were said to mainly target nobles, right?”

“That’s right……. But what gain could anyone acquire by injuring Miss Sii, wan? Miss Sii was unable to receive

recognition, wan. That's why she's neither a noble nor is she a prominent figure, wan. She's merely the adopted daughter of a community leader and nothing more."

"What if they wanted to send a message? Pass on a message by attacking that blood relative within the Earl's castle....."

"That is a persuasive hypothesis, wan. If you exclude the fact that Her Excellency the Earl had personally ordered for that blood relative's arm to be cut off earlier this month, that is, wan."

"It's persuasive even if you don't exclude that. Compared to when the Earl does it herself, the meaning would be different when someone else does it."

"Mm, that's not bad, but how about leaning towards the idea of someone with excessive loyalty, wan?"

"In order to be loyal, they resolved themselves to receive anger and attacked Sii..... while they were at it, they decided to deal with the otherworlder whom the Earl strangely seemed to favor..... Hm. Who would do that?"

"Miss Sophna is a conservative person."

"Heeh, are you suspecting your superior?"

"Wan..... I'm just giving possibilities."

"W-Wait a second!"

Sii shouted in a panic.

"I can't follow the conversation..... where..... so you're saying that I was the target.....?"

"You and Yujin were the targets, wan."

"That doesn't....."

Sii stopped herself in the middle of her sentence. She must have recalled the time when I told her to not be seized by the thought that something is 'impossible'.

She thought for a moment before offering an opinion from a different point of view.

“Be that as it may, relating that with Her Excellency the Earl is a bit…… and the fact that you mentioned even Miss Sophna’s name is taking a step too far. If anything, I’m, mm…… I’m the adopted daughter of Sir Mercè Mikatni, right? I’m also the foster-little sister of the director of the mining industry district. How about that part?”

Roroo tapped her lips.

“Certainly, that is an identity which everyone in the castle is aware of, wan. However, hasn’t it been a long time since Sir Mercè had become bedridden, wan? He also doesn’t have a personality that would make other people hold a grudge against him. Moreover, if that actually were the case, then wouldn’t they aim straight for Abria instead of being all roundabout like this, wan? If they did, then they wouldn’t have to take the risk of entering the Silver Lion Castle.”

“M-Mm…… that’s definitely…… so…….”

Sii became dispirited. I patted her shoulder and reassured her.

“Regardless, that was a good point.”

“R-Really?”

“I agree, wan. A different point of view is always helpful, wan.” Roroo spoke. **“Putting aside the possibility that the attack was aimed at Miss Sii. Yujin, is there no chance that the attack was aimed at you, wan?”**

“Like I said, it could have been a message meant for the

Earl---.”

“Not that. I’m saying that it could have been an attack that was solely directed at you, wan. Is there no chance that the grudge you had piled up in your previous world has followed you into this world, wan?”

I paused.

That was really a possibility that I hadn’t considered.

“There’s an old legend that goes like this, wan. A long time ago, the Fedchants worshiped a god, Higher God Iyanko Niyaon. The apostle of that god had descended and conquered a certain city, wan. That city was ruled under Iyanko Niyaon’s commandment. The commandment of Iyanko Niyaon that’s mentioned here is referring to the saying ‘Anything can be bought with money’, wan---A hundred-year-old elderly person can return to their teenage body with money, wan. An amateur who has never held a knife before can start using skills as long as they pay the money, wan. Even the dead can be revived as long as you pay the appropriate amount of money, wan. Although some may like this, it became a mess for the majority of others, wan. The issue was that the apostle of Iyanko Niyaon would have been fine if they had played like that only within their own city, but they had decided to expand their influence, wan.”

Roroa continued.

“Of course, the world didn’t turn a blind eye towards that, wan. The Twelve Sky Wizards of that time---excluding the ones who had approved the city---were called together and even the royal families’ first princes of the Kingdoms of the Twelve Earthly Branches had decided to move their heavy fingers, wan. However, the thing which was more memorable above all things was the summoning ceremonies carried out by other religious groups, wan. A countless

number of apostles were summoned, wan. The apostle of the god who I subserve, the God of Equality Gainu Warmon, was among them as well. It was the logic that since the opposition was an apostle of a god, they could only be fought by other apostles of gods, wan.”

“An apostle of god can only be dealt with by another apostle of god…….”

“Although there were various theories regarding that, the interesting thing is the fact that among the apostles who were summoned, there was another apostle of Iyanko Niyaon who was summoned by a sect which also worshiped Iyanko Niyaon, but their direction of worship was different, wan. You may have already guessed it by now, but that other apostle of Iyanko Niyaon had carried out the most important role, wan.”

She continued.

“This old incident became known as ‘The Great Black and White Cat War’, wan. Although a various number of things were suggested, among those, there’s an implication that even back in their world, those two apostles of Iyanko Niyaon were already near the state of being mortal enemies, wan. Even the summoned apostles had a trajectory which they had lived their lives following, achievements they had accomplished, results they had acquired.”

Roroa then concluded.

“And enemies they had made. How about you, Yujin, wan?”

Of course, I also had a trajectory which I had lived following. There were achievements I had accomplished. There were results that I had piled up.

And I had enemies.

Had---past tense. Regardless, it was a question whether I could keep that as a past tense or not. Although she's been going around like a dead person right now, Joo Chanmi was still Joo Chanmi. Furthermore, including the fellow who sat behind me in the manga cafe, she still possessed a lot of followers. Saei did say that I acted neurotic.....

“.....Excluding the Silver Lion Earl, is there another way for the people of this world to summon people from another world?”

“I’m not a mage so I don’t know, but..... you heard me tell you about the legend that the apostles of gods were summoned, right? In a way, Her Excellency the Earl’s ability makes it as if she’s riding on a horse in a world where people can only walk and run, wan. Nevertheless, if certain people deemed that it was required, wan, then they would even walk to the end of the world. Wan. Of course, the practicality that comes from the necessity and whether one could shoulder the resources that are required during that process or not is a completely separate matter, but luckily, I’m aware of a group that is able to satisfy both of those conditions. Truthfully, the people who’ve been here in this territory since the previous Earl was still around are all aware.”

The Mage Tower.

“Yujin, what I’m going to say now is also nothing more than a single possibility, wan. Please don’t listen to it too attentively. Is there no possibility that from your world, your enemy, through an organization that is not afraid to antagonize the Silver Lion Earl, was summoned through a completely different summoning process, wan? Thus, is there no possibility that the otherworlder judged that you, the person who’s the same kind of otherworlder as them, would be a hindrance, so they requested the organization that had summoned them to contract an appropriate group, for example, the Gongshik, to eliminate you? Wan. In truth, if

you look back at any large incident, then you'll notice that they have mostly started due to a trivial reason, wan. In a one in ten thousand chance, does the possibility that this assault was actually a skirmish for a proxy war between otherworlders not exist, wan?"



A stillness had settled on top of us. Roroa was staring at me with a curious face and Sii was watching me while holding her breath. I.....

"I feel like you have a rich imagination."

I first broke the silence with that. Roroa flapped her ears.

"Discussions become simpler if extreme situations are introduced, wan. Also, although I do admit that the scale of that idea was rather large, if you spend your time as a guard for a while, you end up witnessing a lot of unbelievable occurrences. Previously, when I was dispatched to the Bongshin Territory, I got lost and ended up in an unlicensed pioneer village, wan. In order for the people in that village to survive, they had to form a contract with monsters, wan. They're known as Weken' villeta(Translating..... Assuming it to be 'The twisted that crawl'). Since they are unable to breed with their own kind, they're monsters that require the wombs of other races, wan. Although they call it a womb, they don't necessarily require an actual female womb. It's fine as long as they just have the inner parts of a body, wan."

".....So?"

"The people of that unlicensed pioneer village supplied the monsters with their elderly people."

Roroa folded her ears and whined for a moment before continuing.

“They tied up the old folks, who had lost all of their teeth and were suffering from chronic illnesses, in the center of the village and made them act as artificial wombs so that they could conceive the children of those monsters. Wan…… It’s disgusting and extreme, but in their positions, it was a ravishingly reasonable solution, wan. You cannot be seized by the thought of ‘that’s impossible’.”

“I agree with that, but still, how should I say it…… my past isn’t interesting. Not only is it common, but it’s childish as well. I lost my parents when I was little and I continued to go to school after that. I wasn’t a being who had a world under his command and, later on, even if I were able to, I will not be able to become that sort of person. My enemy and I are both like that. If you weigh us both, then we’re boring people.”

“Similar to how becoming something because you wanted to is limited to a certain number of people, there are cases where people become something despite not having wished for it, wan.”

“Yeah. I won’t deny that as well. However, as my past is an uninteresting story, and both my enemy and I are boring individuals, there’s a different reason as to why they’re unrelated to this incident.”

Rorora tilted her head.

“Why do you think that, wan?”

“Well, let’s put the motives aside for a moment. We’re nearly getting to the zenith of our discussion so let’s talk about a method that’s substantive. Look at this.”

I took out my iPad. Rorora displayed her curiosity.

“Wan, is this a tool from your world?”

“Yup. Around the time when Ahyeon was here…… it probably existed back then as well but it most likely wasn’t popularized. It’s a convenient tool and it can do a lot of things, but it’s capable of doing this as well.”

I then gave her a brief summary about the spectrogram which I had talked about before coming here. Roroa’s expression changed into a careful one.

“This otherworld technology that can do that voice analyzing thing, is it 100% accurate, wan?”

It was the exact same question as Ariya had asked.

“It’s 100% accurate.”

I gave her the same answer that I had given to Ariya.

“But didn’t you say that their voices were altered, wan? It can do that with even those voices, wan?”

“It’s possible.”

While looking at Sii, who for some reason was snorting proudly, out of the corner of my eyes, I tapped away at the iPad. As expected, Roroa became lost in thought and tapped at her cheek with her finger. She then asked.

“The video of when you were assaulted, you said you recorded it, right? Can I watch it once, wan?”

“Yeah, wait a moment.”

I searched for the video of when we were attacked and pressed the play button.

The video started. Due to the position of where the camera was set up, it was a bottom-up angle that made it feel as if a child had recorded it. No matter how much the technology of hidden cameras

had advanced, there was still a limit to things. The image and sound quality of the recording weren't that impressive. However, in reverse, it evoked a distinctive sense of realism that was similar to that of those found footage movies.

Roroa, who had been watching with a severe face, quietly spoke once the video got to the section where the maid in the front was kicked back and collided against the door sill with the crown of her head.

“So, did you find out who they are, wan?”

“Not yet.”

“Why's that? Didn't you say that it was 100% accurate, wan?”

“I'm still lacking something. I'll be able to figure it out once I've obtained that.”

“What are you lacking?”

“The same exact words as the ones that were recorded in the video. If I'm able to record that and compare the two recordings, then I'll be able to distinguish who the owner of the voice is.”

I looked straight at Roroa.

“That's why I'd like to ask you. Utilize the guards and gather all of the people who work in this castle into a single place. Then make them say the same line while in front of me.”

“.....Hasn't the conclusion that they aren't insiders already been suggested?”

“That isn't 100% certain, right? That's why.”

A long silence flowed between us. Roroa scratched the back of her head.

“For now, it’s currently late in the night, wan. Can we not do this tomorrow, wan?”

“All right, let’s do that. Here you go.”

I finished sewing. Roroa received her uniform and looked as if she were in awe.

“Amazing, wan…… for it to be this straight.”

After putting on her uniform, the buttons of which being in a perfect line now, she gave off much more of a professional aura. The strength of lines and angles was great.

“If it becomes misaligned again, then come to me from now on. I’ll even wash it and iron it out.”

“Ah, you don’t have to…… Honestly, I can just leave it to my subordinates…… Ah, mm, Yujin, but in the case that the owner of the voice doesn’t come out among the castle people…….”

“Then that means they’re outsiders. At the very least, the person who spoke would be the outsider. At that time, I’ll have to start considering the chance of this being an instigation by another otherworlder like you had mentioned earlier.”

“At most, that’s just another possibility so don’t mind it too much…….”

“I won’t. Well, let’s think about that after we do this.”

“Yes, then I’ll see you tomorrow, wan.”



After leaving the headquarters of the guards, we started to walk.

It was late into the night. The floating moon was simply scattering rays of clear light throughout the cloudless sky. Albeit, my actual mood while walking through that light was as black as it was while I was still in the basement.

“Yujin, why are you making that face?”

Sii looked up at me with her arms behind her back.

“I just feel a bit stifled.”

“Mm~~? The air, is clean. Try taking deep breaths. Hoo- ha, hoo-ha.”

How cute.

“What’s with that face!? Really, how rude. When we return, you’ll massage my feet until I fall asleep!”

“Yes yes.”

“Uu, so halfhearted…… but really, why are you making that face? We’re continuously advancing, aren’t we?”

I selected my words for a moment.

“That progress is the actual problem.”

“What do you mean?”

“Miss Sii, what do you think will happen once this incident is resolved? Let’s say that we found the culprits and captured them. What do you think will happen next?”

“Hm? Well, obviously…… ah.”

Sii furrowed her brow.

“Yujin, don’t tell me you’re worried about them. You’re concerned that Her Excellency is going to capture, torture, and then execute them? Of course, she’ll torture them before executing them.” Sii cautiously looked around our surroundings and whispered after confirming that there was no sign of any presence near us. “That’s all she knows how to do. She isn’t even able to do it properly at that. But that’s the natural consequence of what those guys did. No matter how kind you are, I don’t think it’s something that Yujin should be worried about.”

“Is that how you think?”

“Yup. Because those people, attacked me. And they also attacked Yujin! If Yujin weren’t beside me and I was just sitting there absentmindedly, if Ariya didn’t appear. Regardless of whatever terrible thing they intended to do, they would have been free to do anything. If I consider that fact, then whatever punishment they receive seems cheap to me. I’m not kind enough to worry about the enemy.”

Her words were firm.

I felt relieved as well. In that regard, I don’t think I’ll have to worry about our opinions colliding. I also wasn’t kind enough to worry about the enemy.

No.

I, wasn’t kind in any regard.

“I was thinking about something a bit different.”

“What?”

“What do we require the most right now?”

Sii fell into thought for a moment…… her eyes soon became wide.

“Don’t tell me. Those masked fellows who attacked us, once you find out their identities, you plan to threaten them and make them our comrades?”

It has been 1 week since I told Sii to think on her own. I was a bit in awe. Although there were occasional times where her emotions got ahead of her, she absolutely did not have a bad head.

“That is a possibility of one category.”

“That’s reckless! They’re people who carried out that sort of dangerous action. There’s no way we could tame them. If things go bad, then we’ll be the only ones to be eaten. Moreover, if we get caught by Her Excellency…… as I thought, wouldn’t it be better to perform a meritorious deed by capturing the criminals and delivering them?”

“The negative parts are exactly as Miss Sii had described, however, I wish to evaluate the positive perspectives. For starters, the fact that they’re either not afraid of the Earl or, at the very least, they’re able to suppress that fear. So in compliance to that, the second fact is that they’ll be able to fight against the Earl together with us later on. And third.”

I unfolded a finger.

“The fact that we’ll have a hold of their lives.”

Sii blankly stared at my unfolded finger.

“Those fellows should also be able to tell that the Earl is more angered than imagined right now. If we hold onto that secret, then they will have no other choice but to obey us unconditionally.”

“Obey unconditionally…….”

Sii mumbled those words as if she were letting them flow by.

Because of her low self-esteem and her overflowing sadism that came from that, the idea of making them follow us must have sounded amazing to her.

However, instead of responding with a nod, she said these words.

“Mm~~..... But Yujin. That isn’t all, is it?”

This was a bit---no, this was really unexpected.

“Although everything you said just now is probably true, although that’s probably why you said it with sincerity, and although just those things alone are enough to actually tempt me a lot, still, Yujin. As I thought, those aren’t the only reasons, right?”

“Why do you think that is the case?”

“Well, obviously, that’s because, in the end, Yujin will go and say ‘there’s a limit to making someone obey when threats are used.’”

As much as I thought I had a grasp of Sii, Sii had a grasp of me as well. Everyone is able to grow up and, compared to before, they’ll become capable of placing different things into their line of sight once they’ve done so. It’s something that I had experienced during the 8 Years’ War, and although it was obvious, it was a bit embarrassing as well.

And it was also a joyous occasion.

“As expected, if there’s an option where no one has to die, then that direction would be better.”

With her arms behind her back, Sii giggled.

“Mm~~ that’s right. Just as I had expected, Yujin is kind.”

Like I said, that wasn’t the case. I wasn’t able to say those words out loud for some reason so I merely adjusted my glasses.



Like that, we returned to Sii's room. The scent of Sii that had soaked into the room welcomed us. Ever since we had moved into Sii's room, although one of the things that Ariya had endeavored to do was erase that very scent, that effort resulted in Sii's body odor transferring onto Ariya, something which neither parties wanted. It was so severe that the Ariya of that time would hug her knees in the corner of the room.

The reason why I'm mentioning this was not only because I was reminded of it the moment Sii's body odor welcomed us, but because Ariya was currently doing that same exact pose in the same exact corner of the room. Sii tilted her head.

“Ariya, what are you doing?”

“.....I have no reason to tell you.”

“Ah, whatever! I'm not sure what's the matter, but do as you wish! I won't care what~soever after all!”

What happened to that growth she showed earlier?

“You said you were going to meet Alshi, right? Did something happen?”

“This is unrelated to Fair Grace.”

“Yeah. I don't intend to stick my head into a couple's business.” I then casually tossed her a question. **“You did meet her, right?”**

Ariya let out a sigh.

“No, she didn't open the door for me......”

Mm.

Then that means there's a bit of a problem here.

“Get up.”

“.....? Are you, referring to me?”

“Yeah. It's an order. Also, let's go to Alshi's room together. This is an order as well.”

“.....Fair Grace, what do you---.”

“It's for Alshi's sake. I'll explain later. Let's go.”

Ariya opened her eyes wide. I turned towards Sii.

“Miss Sii as well. We'll be going immediately.”

“Mm? What.....” Sii, who had sat down on her bed and was in the middle of taking off her shoes, looked at me. **“Mm~~ okay. Let's go.”**

Sii slipped her shoes back on and got up. I left the room. Ariya still looked utterly confused, but she eventually followed after us.

It wasn't long before we had crossed the hallway and stood in front of a room that was a floor below ours. It was a 2-person room that was once used by both Alshi and Ariya, but now that Ariya had moved in with us, Alshi was using this room by herself.

I knocked on the door.

There was no reaction.

“Fair Grace, why exactly..... what did you mean when you said that this was for Alshi's sake?”

I pounded my fist against the door loudly.

There was no reaction.

“Fair Grace!? It’s the middle of the night right now! Alshi is probably asleep---.”

“Miss Sii, break it down please.”

I said while pointing towards the door.

Ariya momentarily showed an expression that made it clear that she didn’t understand, but Sii immediately nodded. With her arm which hadn’t been severed before, Sii reached out her left hand and grabbed onto the doorknob. At the same moment that the veins on her hand could be seen, the doorknob was crushed.

“What are you……!”

Ariya, who was starting to shout due to her surprise, lost her voice in the next moment due to an even bigger shock.

Past the demolished door, there was a small girl who was collapsed. She was in a state where her long, black, ebony-like hair, that reached down to her waist, was sprawled over the mattress. The dim moonlight that was flowing in through the broken window was shining down on top of the small body. It felt as if she had fallen into a shadow.

Into a scarlet shadow.

A dagger was stabbed into Alshi’s chest. The flowing blood was spreading on top of the mattress.

“Alshi!”

Ariya cried out and ran forward. I took Sii, who had frozen up due to the surprise, into the room as well. I entered the room and examined the surroundings. 1) The window was broken 2) Alshi had been stabbed in the chest 3) It hadn’t been that long since she was stabbed 4) The dagger that was stabbed into her was the same exact dagger as the ones the masked maids held 5) A mask was placed next to her 6) A piece of paper and a pen were placed next to that 7) And

Alshi was…….

“Alshi!” Ariya gripped onto Alshi’s shoulders and shook her.
“Alshi…….!”



Cough. The tiny sound of a cough flowed out from Alshi's throat. She was alive. Ariya's lover, the small martial artist type maid was not dead yet.

That was a relief. For now, I grabbed onto Ariya's hand and stopped her.

“Don't shake her. Lay her down like that. Keep speaking into her ear. This is an order. Miss Sii, come here and press down on the bottom portion of the wound. Don't do it too strongly. If your max strength is 10, then use about 3 or 4 of that. Quickly.”

The two flustered girls soon started to do what I had told them to do. I placed a hand on Ariya's shoulder. Her body had become so hot that it felt as if my hand would be burned. It was to the point that it almost felt as if I could smell something burning. While I was calming her down, I grabbed Sii's hand and adjusted her strength to just the right amount. I then moved my line of sight towards the piece of paper on the side. Although it was written in this world's language and the handwriting was a mess, I was immediately able to read it once I concentrated.

The moment I had finished reading it, I heard the sound of someone's voice from the hallway.

“Just what's with all the noise!? It's so noisy that I can't sl.....”

It was Mari's voice.

“Mari! Bring a clean towel!”

“Ha? Why do I have to listen to.....”

Mari entered the room and froze. I shouted towards Mari.

“Please! A clean towel and something to tie her with. Something long. Make sure they're both clean!”

Her hesitation, lasted for only a moment. Mari nodded before turning around and running off. The sound of murmurs from the hallway became louder. We had made this much noise in a place that was a part of the maid dorms. There's no way that it wouldn't be quiet.

Think. Think about this.

Shortly after, I shouted.

“Raya! Boil some water! Kina! Bring a needle and some thread and disinfect them in that water! Seri! Bring three others here and clean this room up. Aresa! Chase after Mari and bring back the towel and the other item from her and tell Mari to go and call the Earl here. Tell her that Alshi was stabbed, that she shouldn't use her summon, and to come here so we can discuss it. Please!”

The murmurs which had no direction a second ago soon became orderly. Like I had instructed them to, Seri and the other maids flinched for a moment when they entered the room, but they eventually proceeded to carry out my request of organizing the room.

“Alshi, Alshi, Alshi, Alshi, Alshi…….”

Ariya wept while her lips were placed near Alshi's ear. Sii, who was holding the wound and stopping the bleeding, turned towards Ariya.

“Ariya…… don't worry. It'll be okay.”

“But, but…….”

“It's okay. It'll be okay. Right, Yujin? It'll be okay…… right?”

“It's fine.”

Even if it wasn't fine, I was going to make it so. Sii followed my response with a nod.

“You heard him. Even Yujin said it’ll be okay. If Yujin says it’s okay, then it’s okay. You know, right? The fact that Yujin is smart. You heard about how he got my arm back, right? That’s why, Ariya…….”

“Yes, okay…….”

Ariya sniffed. Sii didn’t say anything more and patted her on the shoulder.

It was around that time that Kina had entered the room.

“Woof! Yujin, here’s the towel you asked for and this is okay, right? A washed stocking…… Kyaak, Al-shi-!”

“Thanks. Seri! Receive those from her and hand it to me. Kina, can you quietly leave the room?”

Kina must have also noticed that her body, which had instinctively entered its unsheathed state, was occupying too much space in the room, as she had obediently excused herself. Seri brought the towel and stocking to me just as I had requested.

“Are you going to take it out……?”

“I can’t. Look at the shape of the blade. A professional has to remove it. I’m going to fix the blade in place.”

The needle and thread soon arrived. With the goal of simply stopping the bleeding, I performed first aid while using all of the medical knowledge that I possessed.

It was around then that Mari arrived with the Earl. To be exact, Zia arrived while giving the Earl a piggy back ride.

“Yujin! Who was stabbed!? What happened!?”

“Zia…….”

My sword. I didn’t think I’d be this glad to hear her voice. However,

it wasn't the time to feel at ease yet.

“Earl.” As if responding to my call, the Earl got down from Zia’s back. “Medicine…… Alchemy Fortress. Anything, summon someone who can take care of this wound.”

Even the respectable Earl didn’t ask for an explanation while in this situation. The Silver Lion Earl took out a medicine bottle from her skirt pocket.

“This. The thing that was used on your arm earlier. It’ll take care of most injuries. In regard to a doctor, wait a second. Let me try to think. Of someone appropriate---.”

“I shall take a look.”

It was a voice that I was hearing for the first time.

The voice had also spoken in Korean.

Zia paused. Sii’s gaze became disorderly as well. The maids started to murmur among one another. I turned towards the location where the voice had come from and saw a woman standing there with a staff held in her hand.

I could guess who this woman was.

“Sophna.”

The exclusive mage of the House of the Silver Lion Earl and the head of the vassals, Sophna nodded. Her yellowish green hair that flowed down all the way to her waist waved slightly as her head moved.



She resembled a willow tree.

She was tall. She looked as if she were nearly as tall as me. Her long, flowing, yellowish green hair had a distinct presence like the seaweed that waved at the bottom of the dark and deep ocean floor. She didn't look healthy. Her body was skinny and on her face, which was as white as the inner flesh of a tree, there were a lot of freckles. However, I could feel elegance from her yellowish green pupils and the silver cracks that were in the center of them.

The Earl spoke.

“It's been a long time, Sophna.”

“Yes, Mii. It's been a month and a half. It would be a good idea if we saved our greetings for later. **Hand me the bottle. This lady shall tend to the wound.**”

As I expected, although it seems this woman also had a large gap between the way she spoke this world's language and the way she spoke the Korean language, that wasn't important right now. After receiving the medicine bottle from the Earl, Sophna approached us. She then touched the handle of the dagger that was stabbed into Alshi's chest with the end of her staff.

The roots that reached out from her staff gripped around the handle of the dagger. It continued to go further down and the roots wrapped around both the blade and the area that was stabbed. Although it should have looked as if the staff were taking root, the movement of the roots was more like flowing water, and in reality, it was faster than that and had no openings. Shortly after, Sophna poured the medicine on top of that. Once she had recited a spell, yellowish green leaves sprouted from the roots and changed the roots into vines.

Sophna tapped the handle of the dagger once more with her staff. The dagger was slowly pushed out from the inside. Although the bizarrely curved blade was drenched in blood, not even a single drop of blood bled out after the blade was removed.

Alshi coughed.

“Alshi!”

Ariya cried out. Sophna hit her on the head with her staff.

“I understand your feelings, but do not shout.” She continued after switching to speaking in Korean. “Mii, will you tell me what happened here?”

The Silver Lion Earl furrowed her brow.

“I’d like to know that as well. Is Alshi okay? She doesn’t look okay. Also, Sophna, how did you find out about this to have come here?”

“It shall be fine. However, it seems quite the vile curse was placed on the dagger. If it seems to take time, then that will probably be because of the neutralizing process of that curse. And, in regard to why I am here, Mii. It is because I am not actually an old hag with dementia. Would it be fine if I looked over this child a bit?”

“Go ahead. Now then, the explanation of this situation…… Ariya is in that state and I can’t leave this in the hands of Mikatni’s adopted daughter. Mr. Yujin. The urgent problem has been resolved. Tell us what happened here.”

“Since everyone should hear it, I’ll speak like this. Ariya said that Alshi wouldn’t see her so we came together as a group of three. Ariya appeared incredibly anxious to the point that it felt as if she wouldn’t be able to get any sleep. I knocked on the door and I heard the sound of someone escaping. That’s why we broke down the door and entered.”

“The sound of someone escaping?” Zia looked out of the broken window. **“……The courtyard. Your Excellency, should I conduct a search?”**

“No. Zia, you need to stay here and protect me. The search and investigation should---.”

“Has something happened, wan?”

A new voice, but a voice which I also knew. It was Roroa. The Silver Lion Earl's voice was mixed with annoyance.

“You got here rather quickly, Roroa. Did you just ask what has happened? The maid that had gone to call the guards should have given you the rough explanation.”

“My apologies, wan, Your Excellency. I didn't come here because I was called, wan. In order to fulfill the instruction which Yujin over there had given…… blood!? Even Miss Sophna is here!? Wan…… just what…… I'll assemble the guards immediately, wan!”

“Yujin's instruction? What instruction are you talking about?”

“To gather the people of the castle tomorrow for an investigation…… that's why I was going to inform all of the maids about it tonight, wan! Your Excellency, Miss Head Guard. So may I go assemble the guards……?”

“Do so.”

As she was the Head Vassal, she was also the Head Guard, really, Sophna, who apparently possessed all sorts of important titles, gave Roroa permission. Roroa immediately turned around and sprinted off. The Silver Lion Earl, who was watching Roroa's back as she went off, clicked her tongue once Roroa disappeared around a corner before turning towards me.

“Mr. Yujin, so---I'd like to hear the explanation of this situation. Not the details, but an explanation.”

“This mask, dagger, and what's written on that piece of paper, take a look at them.”

Zia picked up the items that I listed and handed them to the Earl. The Silver Lion Earl read what was written on the piece of paper with her brow furrowed. The following was written on the piece of paper:

⟨Your Excellency the Earl, I apologize. I am one of the two culprits who had assaulted the two. As it is difficult for me to give both the details and reveal the identity of my accomplice, like this, I have voluntarily decided to take this path in order to repent.⟩

And, at the very bottom of the page, there was a drawing of the seal of the Mage Tower.

The Silver Lion Earl crumpled up the paper.

“Ah hah ha. What’s, this? Hm? Mr. Yujin, what is this?”

I chose my words carefully.

“I believe that it is most likely an attempt to throw off our investigation.”

“Of course it is! Those Mage Tower bastards, how dare they mess around like this!”

Once more, I chose my words carefully.

“There’s a chance that it isn’t the Mage Tower.”

“How can it not be!? Look at this seal!”

For the final time, I chose my words carefully.

“It was drawn by a pen. As long as it isn’t formally stamped---.”

“Yeah, they can attempt to get out of it! Damn it! Since it was just drawn by some person from only God knows where, it can’t be used as evidence against them---How dare they! How dare they play this sort of trick!”

“Mii.” Sophna turned towards the Silver Lion Earl. “Calm down and---.”

“Stay quiet! You especially!”

Sophna closed her mouth. While baring her teeth, the Silver Lion Earl crumpled the piece of paper and tossed it before turning around.

“I’ll be going, Sophna. Since you’re here, solve this case as the head of the guards. At the very least, show some progress. Do you understand?”

“.....I’m sorry, Mii. Even now, I cannot stay here for long. The state of the central water source---.”

“Shit! Aaaaah, whatever. So you’re saying that you can only fucking talk back. I’m sorry for bothering you even though you’re so busy. If Alshi dies, then I’m going to kill you. I’ll see you later.”

I turned back towards Sii and Ariya. I gazed at Alshi. I then met eyes with Sophna. Green pupils. Residing within those pupils, silver lines were aimed at me like the blades of swords. The guards assembled by Roroa were going to arrive soon and the maids were in a state of confusion. There was a countless number of anxieties. In order to handle this variable, I had to remain here.

However, the Silver Lion Earl’s eyes were like magma rising up from an iceberg.

“Earl.”

“Aang? What is it?”

“Take me with you. I have something to report.”

I said those words.



The moment the Silver Lion Earl entered her office, she grabbed me by the collar and threw me on the ground. She then mounted herself on top of my waist. Nails dug into both of my shoulders. She must have been fairly upset as her thighs, which were placed on top of my waist, felt like water balloons that were filled with hot water.

“Earl.”

Instead of responding, the teeth-gnashing girl, whose face was brought so close to my own that our faces were nearly touching, abruptly bit down on my neck.

An aroma that smelled like a peach had been soaked in milk until it became a pulp.

“Your Excellency!?”

Zia, who had entered the room along with us, became panicked and called out to the Earl, but the Silver Lion Earl continued to nibble on my neck. Although it didn’t hurt, I knew that her bite was just strong enough to definitely leave teeth marks. I stayed still. The Silver Lion Earl finally removed her mouth from my neck around the time when the area where she was biting down onto had started to feel itchy.

“Mr. Yujin.”

She spoke.

“Yeah.”

“What do you have to report?”

“Before that, may I service you a bit?”

“Go ahead.”

I hugged her. I caressed her back and stroked her head. Normally, if I moved my hand higher than her neck, then she would go absolutely crazy, but she was strangely docile today. She wasn’t

completely docile though. The higher my hand went, the deeper her nails dug into my shoulders.

In the end, I gave up on the back of her head and lowered my hand. I caressed the back of her neck and back. Although the touch couldn't be felt properly due to her thick clothes, the Silver Lion Earl must have felt displeased by that as she then twisted her body.

“Wait one second. Zia, my coat.”

The Earl took off her coat and tossed it to the side. Zia bewilderedly caught the Earl's coat. The Silver Lion Earl, now in just a shirt, leaned her body against mine once more. A heavy sense of weight. I held her tightly and caressed her. Each time she breathed in, thump, thump, I could feel the sensation of her beating heart.

“You.”

The Silver Lion Earl placed her hand on my chest.

“I've always been curious, but do you wear cologne?”

“Yeah.”

“You're like a girl. Or is it a type of pheromone attack?”

“Impressions are important after all.”

“Hmm. Well, it's not bad, but---the next time you go to Korea, buy me some as well.”

“I will. Is there anything else you want?”

“Ah hah ha ah, was it called a bucket list? But that gives too much of a self-centered feeling. If you aren't able to buy something even though it was written down on that list, then even the person who's on the receiving end would feel like they're at a loss. That's why it's fine. Just buy things at your own discretion, Mr. Yujin. I'm sorry that I'm unable to pay attention to your wage.”

“I’m fine with that last thing. It’d be convenient if I had one, but it’d honestly be better to receive physical goods instead of cash in this world.”

“Hm, is that so? Then how about two sacks of rabbit potatoes?”

“Not that. I mean things like medicine.”

“Magic goods, huh~ I told you before, but it’d be a good idea to be careful with those. Nothing in this world is free. An appropriate price is required for any magic. If you aren’t a super genius with an ability like mine that is.”

“You’re probably right, but there are still things that are impossible in Korea, and yet are possible here.”

“Hmm. You’re right about that. Now that I think about it, have you ever been outside of the castle, Mr. Yujin? I mean something like looking at the city.”

“No, not yet.”

“The streets are soon going to become crowded because of the arena. It’s probably already crowded right now, but it’ll later become even more congested than now. Items that usually aren’t stocked will start to be in stock in the marketplace, peddlers will arrive, and non-human merchants may arrive as well. Have a day out later on and leisurely take a stroll around the city. I’ll even give you some money.”

“Would it be fine to try and sell some of the things that I brought back from Korea?”

“Mm~ At that time, I guess you could sell them depending on the mood. But things that can be dismantled and recreated aren’t allowed, okay? Those Mage Tower bastards will definitely find out and buy the stuff off of whoever you sell them to.”

I patted her back. The Silver Lion Earl made a purring sound.

The awkwardly standing Zia spoke.

“Your Excellency…… am I supposed to just stand here and watch over the two of you loafing around?”

“What, do you have a problem with that? Do you want to join in as well?”

Zia twitched as her face became red and she cleared her throat…… Of course, she wasn't a girl who'd give that sort of reaction.

“I exist solely for that purpose!”

Zia uttered a line that she shouldn't say to her parents or her teacher and leaped from her position. Ah, that idiot. I'm lying down right now and the Silver Lion Earl was on top of that me. In other words, if she jumps like that, then on the Silver Lion Earl's back---

“Gaah!”

The Silver Lion Earl cried out. Zia panicked and examined the Silver Lion Earl.

“Your Excellency, are you okay?”

“Do I look okay!?”

“Your Excellency…… I apologize. As punishment, I'll lie on top of Yujin this time.”

“Oh, cool. I'll be knee diving.”

Zia switched positions with the now standing Earl and laid on top of me. Compared to the Silver Lion Earl, Zia certainly had more volume to her body and she was also firmer. If the Silver Lion Earl was rubber, then Zia was like clay. Her scent was similar as well. I wonder if it was because of the fact that she had been working heavily in the arena before coming here, but the slight scent of dirt was emanating from Zia. Or perhaps she always smelled like this. On the back of the

Azure Rose Knight, who had taken root in clay---

the Silver Lion Earl's knee slammed down.

“Guha!”

“How's that, Zia?”

“Every time I interact with Your Excellency, I'd always worry that my back will one day break. It seems like today must be that day.”

“Ah ha, you're just making a fuss. I haven't even gotten started yet. Get ready, okay? I have 108 different types of knee dives.”

“You're all aware that I'm pinned at the bottom, right?”

The Silver Lion Earl answered by doing a 360 crescent rotation knee dive from the top of her desk. Like that, my protest was swept between Zia's cleavage.

In that manner, time flowed by for a while. The Silver Lion Earl wiped her forehead with a satisfied expression on her face.

“Phew. As expected, getting some exercise is good.”

“My waist..... my waaaist......”

“You're exaggerating. You start crying whenever it gets even a little tough. I recall the night where my mother told me that a female knight was only useful in the bed.”

“Kuh.....! Your Excellency, I shall prove that those words are untrue! I absolutely will not lose after all! I swear on my honor as a knight!”

“Ah hah hah hah ha. That's a good spirit. I'm moved. However, it's meaningless. I'll let you have a taste of a technique that no female can ever win against.”

“Playing around is fine and all, but can you guys get off of me

first?”

The two scratched their heads before dismounting me. I was finally able to stand up after throwing more strength into my body. Although I felt as if my body had become squashed by 1mm, it was probably just my imagination.

The Silver Lion Earl supported the back of her head with her interlocked hands.

“So, Mr. Yujin. What did you have to report?”

I placed my lips against the end of the Silver Lion Earl’s foot.

“Sorry. I actually had nothing to report.”

A silence flowed by for a moment.

“Explain.”

“Because you seemed to be in a bad mood. I only said that because I wanted to relieve your mood a bit.”

“In order to prevent me from going to the torture chamber, huh? Mr. Yujin, are you aware? That I’m reallyreallyre~~~ally annoyed.”

“Sorry.”

“Whatever. I had a hunch that that was the case anyway. Just keep licking.”

Even while saying that with a sour face, the Silver Lion Earl sat down on her chair. I did as I was told and held her foot in my mouth as I massaged her with my utmost sincerity. Since even Zia knew that she shouldn’t make a joke in a situation like this, the sound of a tongue and some saliva brushing against fiber and skin was the only thing to resonate throughout the silent room for a while.

“Stop.”

The Silver Lion Earl spoke.

I lowered my head. The Silver Lion Earl naturally placed her foot on top of my head. Press, press. The end of her sock, which was wet with my saliva, touched the back of my neck, leaving a wet sensation.

“Mr. Yujin. Tell me what you intend to do from now on.”

I spoke while keeping my forehead down on the carpet.

“I think it would be a good idea to leave it alone for the time being.”

“Your reason?”

“First, because the enemy has gotten in too deep. At first, it was me and Sii. Alshi was next. Both assaults happened within the Silver Lion Castle and they even occurred in the sick room and an area that’s supposed to be the main dwelling of the maids. If we move too hastily while in this situation, then Earl, there’s a chance that you’ll be in danger. My second reason is the fact that we now have a grasp on who our opposition is. That this was an instigation from the Mage Tower. As long as we know their identities, there’s no need for us to rush.”

“So Mr. Yujin is also certain that it was an instigation done by the Mage Tower.”

“Because if I think about it now, that’s the only answer I can think of.”

The Silver Lion Earl paused for a long time before speaking.

“If that’s the case, then what should I do in order to deal with this?”

“For starters, one thing. How many summons do you have left this month?”

“Wouldn’t you be able to find out if you took a look yourself? I have three summons left.”

“I think it’d be a good idea if you stayed low until your ability resets on the first of the next month. I know that this would seem like you’re running away so you probably won’t like it, but---.”

“It’s not probably. You were talking really seriously so for a second I thought you weren’t talking bullshit. So you’re saying that this Silver Lion Earl has to stay low and avoid the pieces of trash who’re waving their arms around in my castle?”

The Silver Lion Earl’s voice was low and cold. I spoke earnestly.

“Until the first of next month. Earl. This is my request.”

“.....Haah, even if I did wait. Will some sort of brilliant idea pop up when that time arrives?”

“It will.”

I stated.

“I’ll create one by then. I’ll leave a thorn mark that cannot be erased on the Mage Tower. That’s why, Earl, for now.”

The Silver Lion Earl went quiet for another long pause. As my head was currently being stepped on, I was unable to see what sort of expression she was making right now. After being silent like that for a while, the Silver Lion Earl eventually let out a sigh.

“You’ll have to keep those words, Mr. Yujin.”

“I will.”

“Also, another thing---I can’t give you a definite answer. If the Mage Tower provokes me like this one more time before the next month has arrived, then.”

“Then at that time, you don’t have to hold back.”

I answered her.



Sii, who was running about in confusion in the hallway near the office, showed a face of relief the instant she saw me exit the room.

“Yujin! Are you safe? Are you okay? She didn’t do something severe to you, right?”

She did, but that wasn’t important right now.

“Miss Sii. Where is Ariya right now?”

“Ariya? If it’s that girl, then she finished being questioned by the guards and went to the sick room. Alshi and Miss Sophna are with her.”

“So you’re saying that she’s next to her injured lover. Although that’s admirable, if you consider our current situation, it’s not that good. Moreover, it’s a problem that she’s also with Sophna…….”

My thoughts flowed out of my mouth. Sii, who had been listening with a panicked look on her face, soon figured out what my point was.

“Yujin, do you need Ariya? ……And during that process, you don’t want to meet Miss Sophna?”

“Yes. If I were to meet that person now, then there’s no doubt that something bothersome will occur.”

“Why do you say that? Mm~~ no, if Yujin says so then that’s probably the case, but Miss Sophna is a good person. Of course, I can understand your surprise because she came up all of a sudden, but is there a need to avoid her?”

Sii didn’t say ‘You can’t avoid her forever anyway’, however, I responded to her as if she did.

“I cannot right now. At the very least, I have to meet her after this case has been settled. Sequences are important after all.”

“Mm…… okay. Yujin must have something in mind. So you want me to bring Ariya, right? In a way that won’t let Miss Sophna notice that Yujin was the one who had called her. But if I go…….”

Sii trailed off. Certainly, if Sii were the one to go, then she would be questioned as to whether her reason for calling Ariya was related to me or not. While I was in the middle of thinking about that, I abruptly discovered a maid walking towards my direction.

“Mari.”

“I told you it’s Mari.”

The pronunciation was indeed different.

“Yeah, Mari. Thanks for earlier.”

“I didn’t do that for your sake. Be that as it may, I didn’t do that for you either, Sii. It was merely for Alshi and Ariya. Those two are my friends.”

Sii looked tearful. Although she did hunch her shoulders and shrink back once Mari glared at her, I patted Sii’s shoulder and lowered my head to Mari.

“With how much has happened, isn’t all that enough to consider us as friends now?”

“You must be mad.” Mari wrapped her arms around her shoulders and averted her gaze. **“For someone who did something like that…… to me at the rampart.”**

I did do something that shouldn’t be done to a girl.

“Then at least accept Sii as a friend.”

“Really, you treat everything so easily……. Ah, whatever. It

also seems like Sii hasn't been going around wasting her time lately. I'm fine as long as everyone hangs onto the basics."

An individual that was as integral as this probably didn't exist anywhere else. Even my sensibility that considered that as cute was abnormal.

"Uu..... I-If you're here to just lash out like that---."

"Sii? If you have something to say then don't murmur and say it properly."

"I-I don't particularly..... have something to say....."

Sii shrunk away. Mari looked at her as if she were taken aback before turning back towards me.

"You. Really, why do you speak formally to a thing like that? No matter how masochistic you are, shouldn't there be a limit?"

"Those who are strong to the strong and weak to the weak are the ones of virtue."

"I see that in your world, the more perverted someone is, the greater they are."

I couldn't firmly declare that that wasn't the case.

"At any rate, Mari, I have a request."

"Yes, I figured you did. Without something noteworthy, there's no way that you would be talking to me for this long. What is it this time?"

Momentary stop. Although I planned to ask her to call Ariya for me, I had to explain it to her in a way that would make it so that she would call for Ariya 1) While not revealing that I was the one who called for her 2) Why that can't be revealed 3) And why I couldn't

personally go to fetch her myself.

“Can you bring Ariya here for me? It seems the Earl has something she wants to confirm and I have to go back in soon. Originally, I was going to ask this of Sii, but…….”

I shrugged while trailing off. Sii quickly caught on and made a face that was half tearful and half forlorn.

Mari snorted while shining her smooth forehead.

“Hm, all right. That’s right, instead of asking that Whitey, you’d be better off asking me. Truly, what’s with all of this work in the middle of the night.”

Mari turned around and walked off. Once her figure disappeared into the darkness of the hallway, Sii tilted her head towards me.

“Mm~~ Has Mari, always been this stupid?”

“It’s just that if you change the angle of their line of sight even slightly, then it becomes easier to make them move towards your desired direction.”

“Thinking about things, is rather fun.”

“It’ll continue to be fun. Oh right, Miss Sii, you did well comforting Ariya earlier.”

Sii became embarrassed.

“No, well, since that girl showed her weak side……. Even though she’d usually act tough, she ends up like that if she’s cornered even slightly. Really, it couldn’t be helped.”

“Yes. However, with that same reason, you must never mention that the next time you see her. In other words, lines like ‘Do you know how unseemly you were crying at that time’ or ‘When I comforted you, you were sincerely thanking me while bawling your

eyes out’.”

“Yujin, what do you see me as!? Do you think I’d say things like that? I’m not that sort of petty and crafty person!”

In the future, as it was clear that she was going to utter those sorts of line and may perhaps say even worse things, for the time being, I was aware of this fact and truthfully, deep down, Sii most likely knew it as well. Sii cleared her throat.

“Mm~~ Anyway, Yujin. What are you going to say when Ariya gets here?”

“I will tell you once Ariya is here. Miss Sii is needed as well after all.”

“Okay! I understand. Then I’ll wait.But when Miss Earl said something about the Mage Tower earlier, what happened?”

“Ah, that. At the bottom of the piece of paper that looked like Alshi’s last words, there was a Mage Tower seal drawn there.”

“Eck? Alshi’s last words? What..... and the Mage Tower? Uh..... but..... no, why is it that.....”

Sii tilted her head with her hand placed at the side of her mouth. I spoke.

“Leave it at that for now. Once Ariya has arrived, I’ll explain it in more detail.”

In that moment, the door to the office opened. Zia walked out appearing exhausted and with her hand placed against her forehead.

“Ah, Miss Zia!”

“Hello, Sii. It has been a long time. Is your arm better?”

“Somewhat..... Since Yujin has been looking after me well.”

“That is a relief. I am able to feel at ease.”

A smile that appeared like a blooming spring flower appeared on Zia’s characteristically cold face. I glanced towards the office.

“And the Earl?”

“She just fell asleep. Yujin, you went through a lot of trouble earlier.”

“It wasn’t really trouble. These sorts of stuff always happen anyway.”

“Still, I am grateful towards you. If it were just a few months ago, then it would have been impossible for Her Excellency the Earl to calm down this quickly, especially when this sort of incident has occurred. Yujin, the savior of this city. Your existence is like a miracle to Her Excellency and myself. I am truly happy that I have the honor of knowing you.”

“Zia. I’m really creeped out and put off right now, so can you just talk in Korean?”

“What are you doing, Yujin? I was saying something good but for you to say something so harsh like that all of a sudden. If you’re that bored^[1], then you should humbly commiserate the exhausted me who has been harassed all day today as well.”

“This suits you more.”

Zia pulled on my cheek. Sii giggled.

“Yup~~ There’s certainly less weight in Miss Zia’s words when she uses Korean. When I learned Korean and learned about this a bit later, I was really surprised.”

“Ahn eumuu uh anukuhoh wauh ar ohueheuoh.”

“Yujin, occasionally really does some cute things.”

It wasn't cute. That's why, Zia, you shouldn't nod your head to that either. In that regard, I tapped Zia's hand, but instead of letting go of my cheek, she pulled on it more and whispered into my ear.

“Yujin. If the Mage Tower is making a move again, then does that mean they noticed that I betrayed them……?”

I also whispered back to her in response.

“We are certain of it.”

“Yujin. You occasionally really do some cute things.”

I hit her hand away. I whispered once more towards Zia who was sullenly touching the back of her hand which I had smacked away.

“We can't be certain yet. Your contact. Has that contact of yours, who made you turn coat before, say anything in particular to you?”

“Although I met them right before coming here, they didn't say anything special. Touma Soh didn't appear either.”

“Okay…….” I'll have to deal with that part as well, but this was important right now. “Don't rush. As I told you before, just continue to observe while disregarding them. If there's perhaps a reaction from their side, then tell me immediately.”

“But…….”

“Don't worry. My sword. I'll deal with it.”

“…….” Zia nodded slightly. “I trust you, Yujin.”

I took a step back and made some space between Zia and I. Sii, who had been tilting her head as if she were curious as to what we were discussing, quickly fixed her posture. How cute.

“How have you been?”

Zia laughed hollowly.

“Exactly as I told you earlier. I’ve been harassed by the community leaders of this city, by my teacher, and by Her Excellency. I should be the one to ask if you’ve been doing well.”

“Yeah. Thanks for sending Ariya.”

“There’s no need for you to thank me. Even I, who had received the message, wondered whether that much was necessary or not. But when I heard that you two were attacked afterward, you can’t imagine how surprised I was…… I even thought that the title of New Design Foresight should be returned to Miss Sophna instead of being held by Touma Soh.”

Surely.

If someone were to ask whether I had already guessed this or not, then should I say that I did?---those words filled in the last piece of the puzzle.

“? Yujin, what’s the matter?”

“No.” This wasn’t something that Zia needed to know right this instant. “Should we return, then?”

“Her Excellency wishes for me to sleep by her side. I plan to follow that order. If you consider our current situation where the attackers are wandering around the castle, then this would be the most optimal idea. However, I can’t enter Her Excellency’s bed while in this state. That’s why I’m on my way to take a bath. Do you want to go with me?”

“Don’t say nonsensical things like that so naturally. It’s troubling for even the side that hears it. Especially since Sii will misunderstand. Even right now…… my wrist…… hurts.”

“I-I didn’t misunderstand!Uu~! You’re speaking impolitely!”

Zia smiled once more. Her smile was like the smile of an uncle who was watching over a bunch of babies that were playing around.

It was then that I heard Ariya's voice.

“Miss Zia……?”

Once I turned to look at her, I saw her standing there awkwardly. At the far corner of the hallway, I could see Mari leaning her head out slightly from the corner and peeking at us. She must have seen Zia while she was on her way to bring Ariya here and felt that it would be troublesome if she were to get involved, so she sent Ariya here alone. That was preferable for me as well.

“Ariya, are you all right? You must be uneasy.”

“Yes…… I'm a bit better now. Miss Sophna also said that Alshi was safe…….”

“I see. If it is difficult, then feel free to come to me whenever you wish. I shall help you.”

“That's…… too much. To someone such as myself who is merely a maid, there's no need for the Azure Rose Knight to do such a thing…….”

“This is my consideration towards the one who was originally supposed to become my junior.”

Zia stated. The maid who was born in a fallen household of knights bowed her head. That angle, was a slightly messy 16.5 degrees angle. Zia stroked the head of that Ariya and turned back towards me.

“Then I'll be on my way. If I have some more spare time before I have to go back to the arena, then I'll pay you a visit. I wish you luck, Yujin. Sii, you as well.”

Zia then left like that. Ariya watched Zia leave for a while before speaking.

“Fair Grace. I heard that Her Excellency the Earl was calling for me…….”

“Yeah. That was a lie. Rather than that, let’s go somewhere quiet.”

“Yes…… What? A lie…… huh? ……Eh?”

Coincidentally, there was a quiet, empty room right next to the Earl’s office. I brought Ariya into that room. I turned on the lamp and briefly checked the interior of the room. I asked Sii to move the sofa, desks, and whatever heavy object there was in the room and place them in front of the door in order to prevent anyone from entering.

“I need you both to listen well to what I’m going to tell you from this point forth. I welcome any questions, so if there’s perhaps something that you don’t understand, then ask.”

Ariya, who seemed to be completely clueless, stared at my face and Sii silently nodded her head.

I started to explain.

Ariya was perplexed at first. She soon became panicked. After that, she glumly nodded her head.

I continued.

Ariya abruptly got upset. A sense of coldness started to envelop her voice. Eventually, her voice completely froze and she could no longer say anything more.

I continued.

‘But’, Ariya uttered. ‘I also think that’, the listening Sii aided Ariya. They soon had no other choice but to close their mouths.

I continued.

Ariya lowered her head. Sii placed her hand on Ariya's shoulder with a complicated expression on her face. Ariya didn't avoid that hand, but rather, she leaned her body against it.

I finished talking.

“That’s why, do you understand, Ariya?”

“.....Yes.”

“I’ll be in your care.”

“.....Yes.”

Ariya spoke while clenching her teeth. Sii let out a sigh.

“I’ll, do my best as well.”

“Yes. Then let us go to the guards’ office. Miss Sii. Please move the things that are blocking the door away now.”

Sii did so.



As to how most people would be when they're called out in the middle of the night, the guards all looked tired. Despite that, did the fact that they weren't showing their dissatisfaction mean that they felt guilty for allowing an attack to happen within the castle for the second time, or because they felt responsible for a maid working in the castle being injured, or was it because of their fear towards the Earl? Although those three possibilities were probably all appropriately mixed into their reasons, it might also be thanks to Roroa. If there was an existence who was clearly endeavoring harder than themselves, then it was natural that they wouldn't be able to show their dissatisfaction.

Roroa welcomed us with a completely gaunt face.

“Welcome, wan. Miss Ariya, are you a bit better now?”

Ariya answered by avoiding her gaze. Instead of inquiring any further, the very person behind capturing Ariya for her theft turned towards me.

“You came just in time, wan. It was about time that I asked you some questions as well, Yujin.”

“As long as it’s something that I can do. But are you the one regulating all of this?”

“Yes……. Miss Sophna is busy with the treatment. A report was sent to Vice-captain Ryungste, but he’ll probably arrive a bit later, wan. He’s probably intoxicated to his heart’s content right now. Wan…… I personally wish he’d stay put at where he’s currently located until he’s become completely sober, wan. Her Excellency would become enraged if she were to see him.”

“The Earl is asleep.”

“Then that’s a relief. No, if you think about what’ll happen once she wakes up, then it’s too soon to feel at ease…… Before then, I have to do whatever I can to obtain something that’s worth reporting to her, wan, really…….”

Roroa folded her ears and whined. If I had some digestive medicine, then I would have offered it to her here, but I didn’t have any right now. Instead, I hoped that these words that I was about to say would be enough to wash away the stomachache she was feeling.

“Something that’s worth reporting, I think we can make one.”

“What do you mean? Ah, is it that spectrogram thing? But from what I can tell…….”

“It’s something else. It’s hard to say it here, so let’s go somewhere else.”

Rorora looked around and made a troubled face. However, befitting her sincere and flexible personality, she got up.

We continued to converse while walking down the hallway.

“How do you intend to make one, wan?”

“I thought up a method that’s capable of helping out this investigation. I’ll tell you the details once we’re there. For now, can you tell me about what you’ve investigated so far?”

“Mm…… on principle, I shouldn’t tell you about it, but since this is a continuation of the previous investigation……. It has been deduced that the culprit behind injuring Alshi had broken in through the window. Furthermore, after stabbing Alshi with the dagger, they escaped through that same window. After following the trail, it led to the waterway, wan. If you consider the fact that the waterway stretches here and there throughout the city, then…… that means the attacker can be anywhere in the city by now, wan. They can also be outside of the city.”

“I see. How about the articles that were left behind? The weapon, the mask, and also the piece of paper.”

“They’re currently under investigation. Wan…… Although I said they’re under investigation, Miss Sophna took the weapon, so all we have left are the mask and the piece of paper, wan. We’ve deduced that the mask is genuine, and the paper…… honestly, this item is a pain, wan. It matches Alshi’s handwriting, wan.”

I nodded. Rorora watched my response and let out a sigh.

“But the thing Her Excellency the Earl took note of was the Mage Tower seal at the very bottom. To be exact, a copy of

the seal of the Mage Tower…… is how I should refer to it as, wan. What do you think, wan, Yujin? Do you think this has any meaning…… I mean, do you think this is related to the Mage Tower, wan?”

I nodded when I was in front of the Earl and Zia.

However, here, I tilted my head.

“Before that, there’s something that I want to ask. Among the capabilities of this world’s magic, is there something that’s able to control someone to do something against their will? Like a type of mind control.”

“Mind magic, is it……. At the very least, there’s a spell that can tell apart truths and lies, wan. Projecting a person’s mentality in the form of colors or images is Miss Sophna’s specialty. But I don’t think that’s what you’re referring to.”

“Yeah. If I were to be exact, then I’m referring to a spell that can tamper with a person’s memory or control their minds.”

“I heard that hundreds of years ago, there was a certain Odd Sky Wizard who was capable of doing that, wan. That’s why they were designated as the public enemy of the world, which then resulted in their demise. After that, I’m not aware of anyone else who was said to be capable of doing such things, wan. Although there’s a chance that it’s just me who’s simply unaware.”

So that means that sort of magic is incredibly rare. Well, if that weren’t the case, then societies wouldn’t have been able to come into existence.

“How about a spell to physically control someone? Something like controlling a person like a puppet and making them kill someone else.”

“Wan. If you consider an ability that closely resembles that description, then that’s more on the side of psychokinesis. There are some users of this, wan. A person who’s known as Marionette of the Mage Tower is especially famous for that ability. However, instances where those ability users utilize living bodies are incredibly rare, and it’s normal for them to use dolls or corpses that were imbued with magic, wan. As a guard, this type of information is what we end up learning most about…….”

Roroo responded while smiling bitterly. Even in a society where magic was accepted as a natural thing, the way the people here thought wasn’t so different from my own world.

As we continued to talk like that, we eventually arrived at an empty room. Sii closed the door.

Roroo asked a question.

“So, Yujin. If you’re asking this, then that must mean that you believe the Mage Tower is involved.”

“No. I don’t think so.”

That must have been slightly unexpected as Roroo tilted her head in response to my answer.

“Is that so, wan? Hmm, but if that’s the case, then why was the seal of the Mage Tower drawn onto the piece of paper, wan?”

“Because I’m the one who drew it, of course.”

I answered.

A short silence.

“Pardon?”

The moment Roroa asked back.

Ariya struck Roroa on the back of her head.

Footnotes

1. [\[↑\]](#) ‘Humbly’ and ‘Bored’ can be read the same in Korean.



If you do not hold any expectations, then you cannot be disappointed. As this was the truth, this was a universal fact which everyone knew. Despite that, why do people hope? Why do they go out of their way to shave away at their own body and mind in order to pursue that hope? While harboring the fear that their hope was all in vain, while also being certain that their hope was obviously all in vain.

If I was satisfied with the act of living in itself, then I wouldn't have to do this. Even though I lived in a civilization and society where it was possible to not do this, why am I unable to do so?

Why are we unable to do so?



We firmly tied Roroa to a chair.

Since it wouldn't be enough if I were the one to tie her, I merely gave the binding instructions while Sii was the one who did the tying. We then blindfolded her and bound it firmly so it wouldn't fall off. Because of her body type, she looked like a preschooler who had been kidnapped and bound, but there was no one here who would feel sympathy towards her.

As that happened, Ariya stood on standby at my side while holding a dagger. Eventually, once we roughly finished binding her, I spoke.

“Wake her up.”

Ariya slapped Roroa's cheek with the side of her dagger. Roroa immediately regained her senses.

“Kahak.....!”

“Are you awake now?”

Roroo panicked and tried to toss and turn her body. Albeit, due to her being tied down by Sii's strength, all she could do was squirm.

“This, wan…… what’s the meaning of this, Yujin?”

Her voice was both trembling and in disarray.

“I’m a guard. Wan! This is an assault on an officer!”

“I know.”

“No matter how favored you are, Yujin, by Her Excellency, this is…… Wan! Her Excellency the Silver Lion Earl is a person who understands regulations, wan!”

“Ariya. Make her quiet.”

With the handle of her dagger, Ariya slammed the end of it against Roroo's solar plexus. Thud……! Roroo swallowed down her gasp and groaned. I spoke while looking down at that girl.

“Does it hurt? Ariya is a bit angry right now.” I didn't tell her that I was also upset to a similar degree as her. **“It'd be a good idea to not stimulate her thoughtlessly. Even I had to go through quite the trouble in order to persuade her, after all.”**

“Just what exactly…… E-Even though you may be favored by Her Excellency the Earl, the other two…… Miss Ariya and Miss Sii---.”

The handle of the dagger collided against Roroo's solar plexus once more. Thud……! Roroo let out a whine that was unique to people who had been suffocated. I anticipated the pain that she was currently feeling---it wasn't a difficult task---and took out my beads and gripped onto them once her pain had settled down slightly.

“There's a total of 4 groups involved in this incident, so even I had a hard time trying to organize everything. It'd be difficult to explain, but since I already explained it once to

Ariya and Sii, the second time should be easier. Let me begin.”

“What…… are you saying?”

“The first group is the Gongshik. According to Borg, there were 2 members. It was confirmed that they had entered this city 2 weeks ago.”

“Wan, so what---kah!”

Roroo received a blow on her solar plexus once more and lowered her head.

“Ariya, you’re acting too hastily. Only do it when I tell you to. Okay?”

“……My apologies, Fair Grace.”

“Mm, well. Roroo. There are quite a lot of types of words. Everyone says them. They say them a lot. In both my world and this world, both worlds are overflowing with an excessive amount of words. It’s quite detestable that not all words are true. Which do you take in and which do you throw out? Which words are true and which words are not? Fortunately, or rather, it’d probably be closer to being the exact opposite of fortunate, the thing that you should be aware of, is the fact that I’m really good with these types of things.”

8 Years’ War.

“Although I’ve gotten a bit rusty, was conceited, and made a mistake.”

I turned a bead on my bracelet as I glanced at Sii’s right arm.

“But still, it seems I can’t deny that I’m good at them.”

“What are you saying…… Yujin, I really don’t understand, wan. Just why…….”

“The first group, Gongshik. The fact that they entered the city 2 weeks ago and their member count being 2. Borg’s testimony was true. Except, for now, it’s unknown as to what their reason for coming here was. It’s also unknown as to where they went after that. Although I have a guess for the latter, let’s talk about that after organizing the groups.”

Roroa struggled to cough. The blood mixed in her cough dropped down and landed on top of the chair she was seated on.

“The second group are the fellows who used the Gongshik. Through a certain process, these fellows were able to meet the Gongshik, the first group, and obtained the daggers and masks from them. They then decided to impersonate that organization. The mysterious organization that had been extending their influence recently and yet were not a part of the Black Dragon Street. They probably thought that it would be clean and cause them no trouble later on even if they impersonated that organization.”

“Impersonation……?”

“The third group is Ariya.”

“What……?”

Roroa tilted her head. As if she truly had no idea. As if she had no idea as to why Ariya’s name had popped up here all of a sudden.

I shrugged.

“If I were to be exact, then it’s a bit different. Nevertheless, since Ariya ended up moving independently starting from the mid-point, let’s just call it Ariya. The fourth group is me. I did whatever I could in order to make this situation advantageous for myself. Although I did contemplate for a

bit when I found out that Alshi had been stabbed, it's fine now since she's safe. I can't change my goal here even for Ariya. I decided to keep going."

"I don't....."

"Now then, since we're done organizing the groups, let's go back to the beginning and go over the details."

I spread out a piece of paper on top of a table. I wasn't doing this in order to show it to the blindfolded Roroa, but in order for me to be able to just explain it easier.

"2 weeks ago, 2 people affiliated with Gongshik entered this city. Their goal, indistinct. Their destination, indistinct as well. Their current location was also indistinct..... is what they say, but I said that I had a guess earlier, right? I believe that these two are currently located in the morgue at the basement of the Star Tower."

"What.....!?"

"Yeah." I tapped on the paper. "The two corpses that were recovered from the waterway of the Mining Industry District. These two are probably them."

"Just what are you saying..... how can you be so certain....."

"Of course, that's because these two are the only ones who were discovered as corpses this month. I'm not sure how they ended up dying. They may have met their demise while going after someone completely unrelated. There's also a chance that the second group, the group which intended to impersonate them in the first place, were the ones who had killed them. However, whatever option it may be, their corpses and belongings were discovered by the second group." I continued. "By you."

Roroa's mouth fell open.

“Until that moment, the thought to impersonate the members of Gongshik probably never crossed your mind. The idea must have just come to you after you discovered their corpses and got your hands on their belongings. Your head works well after all. ‘Ah, I can use this. I can impersonate this group.’ like that. This was something that you were already going to do, in other words, it alludes that you had already received orders to attack both me and Sii, but since this isn’t the right time to talk about that yet, let’s put that aside for now.”

“What…….”

“Now then, Roroa. You, who had resolved yourself like that, hid the corpses. But it seems you weren’t able to hide them properly. The corpses were discovered and reported after all. Of course, be that as it may, those corpses ended up going to you who was the assistant commissioner of the guards. In a state where they were all decayed and couldn’t be identified.”

“Why…… Why would you say that I’d do that sort of thing?”

“We aren’t at the step to discuss motives yet. For the time being, let’s just connect the incidents that had occurred. After getting your hands on their belongings, the masks and daggers, you came to attack us. However, you were too anxious to come by yourself. I understand. There are people in the world who are afraid to go to the bathroom by themselves. That’s why you found a comrade and came to attack us with them.”

**“The ones…… the ones who attacked you were two maids--
-.”**

“Ah. Can you stop treating your opposition like an idiot for

a moment? Although furtively saying that they're maids, they're maids and establishing that as an accomplished fact was an okay technique, there's no point in insisting it any further when, at this point, it has already failed. The person who came to attack us, the person who was standing at the front wasn't a maid. While wearing a stolen maid uniform and also a mask, it was you in your unsheathed state."

A stillness flowed by.

".....Why would, you think that?"

Naturally, if someone waves a knife around in front of me, if someone hits me, then I'm able to recognize that bastard the next time I meet them. It didn't matter if that bastard was wearing a maid uniform or a mask. If you got bullied for 4 years and spent the next 4 years after that fighting back, then even you could become accustomed to a technique of this extent. Instead of saying that, I tossed out the ground bait that I had already set up.

"The spectrogram that I told you about earlier."

".....but, you have to say the exact same thing as what was recorded..... that's how, you're able to analyze....."

"That was a lie."

Roroa opened and closed her mouth. I continued to speak.

"Shall I continue? The reason why you came in that attire was because you thought that it would be lacking if you only wore a mask. I understand this as well. You most likely used your little sister's maid uniform. Kina's, that is. Like that, you came to us after equipping another layer of defense."

"No..... wan, I really didn't, wan."

"You attacked us."

“I understand that you’re misunderstanding something because of the technology from your world, wan. Yujin……. But I really…….”

“But an unpredicted obstacle occurred here. Ariya’s intrusion. You, who could no longer subdue us easily, backed out immediately. She was an obstacle of that extent to you. The problem was the comrade who you had brought together with you. The second masked maid who was behind you, Alshi.”

Ariya gnashed her teeth. Roroa opened her mouth, closed it, and continued to repeat this motion. I lowered my voice.

“I feel like I can hear the gears in your head turn from here. That’s right, you saw it as well, right? The masked Alshi combatting against Ariya. You must have thought that it would be dangerous. The two of them are lovers. They always stick together. They probably have spars every day. In other words, if they were to ever fight one another, then there’s a high chance that they will be able to recognize one another.”

I turned towards Ariya.

“And actually, Ariya did realize.”

Alshi is, how should I say it…… she is contemplating about something right now.

“She tried to resolve it by herself.”

“……My apologies, Fair Grace.”

“No, I understand. You’re lovers. If anything, the thing I couldn’t understand was the fact that Alshi didn’t say anything to Ariya, who was her lover.”

As I had guessed, Ariya was probably unable to understand that.

Why her lover Alshi had attacked us. Who the other person with her was. The reason why she wouldn't open her mouth all together, Ariya was most likely unable to understand any of this. The frigid air that flowed between Ariya and Alshi was there because of this.

“Although I have a various number of deductions in regard to this, like I said, let's drop the motives for a moment and talk about what has occurred. Roroo, I'm not sure how you did it, but you received her oath quite unbelievably well. Alshi really didn't tell Ariya anything.”

It's simple, but if Alshi did perhaps say something, then there's no way that Ariya would only give Roroo cold eyes. Until I had told her, Ariya had absolutely no idea that Roroo was that other masked maid. Even after seeing Roroo cling onto Alshi.

“I..... like the time you caught me when I was stealing, I thought that you had somehow caught the scent that Alshi was one of the attackers. That's why I.....”

Ariya's voice was filled to the brim with guilt for having no idea who the main instigator was even when they were directly in front of her. Roroo stammered as she spoke.

“Like I said, Yujin, Miss Ariya, it's a misunderstanding, wan..... I have no idea what you're.....”

“I'll continue. Like so, a stalemate had happened. Although Ariya knew that Alshi was one of the masked maids, it was because of that very reason that she couldn't tell anyone. Alshi didn't tell her the reason for the assault nor did she tell her anything about her comrade. I, at that time, wasn't able to gather the puzzle pieces, so I didn't prod further into the identities of the masked maids. As for you, after considering the possibility that Alshi's identity was revealed to Ariya---or because Alshi herself had confirmed it to you, you weren't able to move. If several more days were to have passed while in that state, although laughable, the assault incident may

have faded off just like that. The majority of the embers of the world are like that after all. However, that didn't happen this time. We have an outrageous nuclear bomb as our lord after all."

The Silver Lion Earl had called us together.

"You must have panicked. I wouldn't be surprised. The Earl was more upset than you had expected, right? You were worried that, in a thousand to one chance, if your identity as one of the attackers were revealed, then you would be dragged off to the torture room, right? Ariya probably felt the same thing. That she couldn't let things continue like this. Her precious lover, Alshi, if the Earl finds out that it was her, then it may not end with just an arm. Like that, one person to protect themselves, and the other person to protect their lover, carried out the same course of action at the same time. You went to Alshi."

I pointed towards Roroa.

"You were a bit faster."

Ariya had returned with us to our room first before heading towards Alshi's room. On the other hand, Roroa most likely immediately headed to where Alshi was. The fact that Roroa wasn't there when we went to the guards' headquarters was because of that. Because she was together with Alshi until then. Thus, because that was the case, or because of another reason, Alshi did not open the door for Ariya.

"You most likely believed that you had to tell her right that instant. If you didn't, then there's no way that Ariya would have returned wordlessly. However, after that, I made a mistake. Because I told you about the spectrogram, you had set up a time limit for yourself."

Although setting up that time limit in itself was my intention, the timing was bad.

“You probably thought this. Since the voice that was recorded was mine, the culprit won’t come out even if they looked through the voices of all of the maids. Moreover, since you heard the condition for the voice analysis from me---the fact that you had to say the exact same line as the ones that were recorded, you just had to avoid that. However, then what would happen next? The smokescreen tactic that you had spread out abundantly---yeah, I’m saying this now, but that nonsense about a proxy war between otherworlders was quite interesting---I could conclude that the attackers were outsiders. I could also report to the Earl that conclusion of mine. If that were to happen, then once more, the investigation could have fizzled out.”

“Yujin, I really…….”

“But that might not happen, right? I could have been certain that it was an insider, but just not a maid. I’m the otherworlder who had resolved the Fedchants case after all. No matter which way you looked at it, I must have been foreboding. You couldn’t underestimate me. These thoughts probably went through your head. Additionally, even if you got past this investigation without trouble, Alshi and Ariya would continue to stick on your conscience. People like you end up obsessing over things like that to an abnormal degree. That’s why you decided to choose a method that was a bit more drastic and cliché.”

Ariya ground her teeth. Her fist pounded into the pit of Roroa’s stomach. Thud……! Roroa gasped and ended up coughing blood, but she soon clenched her teeth together.

“So…… cough, so, you’re saying that I went back to Alshi and stabbed her, wan? Like an assassin?”

Her voice was hard to understand.

“And you’re saying that I then forged her last words and

placed it there, wan? In order for the dragnet to not reach me? Like some sort of Mage Tower schemer? Me, you're saying that I did those sorts of things?"

"You, you're still trying to make excuses.....!!"

Sii had shouted out as if she had grown tired of just listening, but Roroa shouted back in an even louder voice while coughing out blood.

"That isn't so, wan!"

With her head lowered, Roroa shouted desperately.

"Miss Ariya..... Yujin, Miss Sii. It isn't me, wan. It really isn't. I mean, how could it be me? How exactly would that be possible? I was born in this city. Wan..... a native to this city..... I've been working as a guard for more than 6 years now, wan. In order to protect the people of this city! My God, my little sister is even a maid! But you're saying I did that? That sort of act which deserves to be punished by the heavens, that I had even made another maid who works alongside my little sister do that, and that I had even tried to cut off my tail? This me.....?"

As much as the blindfold was able to cover half of her face, she was that small. Her flowing tears soaked her cheeks.

"That's impossible..... I mean, this, this is really absurd, wan..... it's a misunderstanding..... a terrible misunderstanding, wan. Or it's a trap..... why, just why, ah, or maybe this is a performance, wan? Wan..... in order to lure someone else, you're using me as bait..... if that isn't the case, then I don't......"

Ariya hesitantly turned towards me. I glared at Roroa without wavering. Ariya clenched her fists firmly and turned back towards Roroa.

“With the otherworld technology that Fair Grace had mentioned---.”

“I’m, I’m not sure about that, wan…… I don’t know. I mean, is it not technology from another world, wan…… the certainty that that would work properly in our world as well…… Additionally, not only do I not know how they work…… but Ariya, you don’t know either, right? How do I refute against something that I don’t know about…… even if you use that as evidence, only Yujin would be able to comprehend it, wan. I, I can only state that I’m being framed…….”

As I expected, her head worked fast. Honestly, what she said was exactly the case. Those words were enough to be planted as a reasonable suspicion.

“Roroa.”

“Yes, Yujin…… this is really, really a misunder---.”

“I’m aware as well. That this is lacking as a finishing blow. But you know, with everything that I explained to you just now, shouldn’t you have roughly grasped it by now? The fact that I was aware that Alshi was one of the attackers since a long time ago. Do you think that I would have done absolutely nothing?”

“What are…….”

I took out a USB from my pocket. I plugged it into my iPad, approximated the point of time of the video, and pressed the play button.

〈……that, the case?〉

Ariya swallowed down her gasp.

It was Alshi’s voice.

⟨**That’s right, wan. It’ll be dangerous at this rate, wan.**⟩

And, of course---Roroa’s voice.

⟨**But…….**⟩

⟨**I’m sorry, wan. My thoughts were shallow, wan. I didn’t think it’d become this tangled from the start. Wan…… but everything will be taken care of once the prince arrives soon, wan. We just have to wait until then, wan.**⟩

⟨**……Is that, true?**⟩

⟨**Of course, wan! If we work together, then we can protect Ariya, wan.**⟩

Ariya opened her eyes wide. She most likely had no idea why her name was mentioned just now. As someone whose Flaming Goddess was lying in a hospital room, it was one of the deductions that I had already made. What was the keyword that was capable of making someone with a lover become blind and caught in even the most ridiculous of frauds?

“This…… something must be wrong with this, wan.”

Roroa muttered in a voice that sounded as if she were clueless.

⟨**Alshi. That’s why, in order for us to discuss what we’re going to do from this point forth, can you come here---**⟩

“This is really…… I can only say that it’s fake.”

A stabbing sound resonating from the iPad. The sound of a gasp bursting out from Ariya’s mouth.

And the words of denial drifting out from Roroa’s mouth.

“Why would I…… to Alshi. No…… it isn’t the case, wan.”

⟨**I’m sorry.**⟩

“Fake…… it’s a trap, wan.”

⟨I’m sorry…… it couldn’t be helped. If this contin---.⟩

Soon after, the sound of knocking could be heard from the door. We had arrived.

If I were to have let it play further, then we could have probably heard Roroa hurry out the window and roughly leave a fabricated escape trail that led all the way to the waterway before coming back to talk to us as if nothing had happened. Like that, it would have continued on until this very moment. I stopped the video. A deathly silence spread throughout the room.

Roroa’s weeping broke that silence.

“It’s a trap, wan! I have absolutely no idea, wan!”

“Still!”

Ariya screamed.

“You’re still saying that nons---.”

Everything happened in a single moment.

The instant Ariya pulled her shoulder back so she could drive her fist into Ariya’s solar plexus, green particles burst out from Roroa’s body. The moment Ariya instinctively shielded her eyes, unsheathed, Roroa initiated her transformation. As her body swelled up, the rope that was binding her became undone, and with her two now liberated feet, she kicked Ariya away and ran towards Sii.

Claws were held at the neck of Sii who was standing awkwardly. Roroa took off her blindfold once she had finished transforming. Green particles, which she had used to organize her list on the first day we met, were gathered on top of her palm.

“I really didn’t want to do this, wan.”

Her voice was perplexed.

The Ariya, who had fallen down after that kick, pushed herself up strenuously. I spoke quietly.

“The piece of candy that you handed to us earlier. It’s a relief that we didn’t eat it. I feel like I wouldn’t be surprised if I were told that it was filled with poison.”

Roroo responded with a still perplexed voice.

“I mixed some scorpion poison from a Groundspider in it, wan. It’s a long-acting poison. It’s a poison that has been favored ever since Borg Edantres became the head of the branch here, wan. Previously, there was a time where we had to empty an organization that belonged to the Black Dragon Street and I secretly took some.”

“When I took that piece of candy, have you considered the chance that, instead of taking the piece of candy and eating it later like we said we would, we’d give it to someone else?”

“Then that would be your responsibility, Yujin. I’m the assistant commissioner of the guards, wan. Rather than that, if there’s a possibility to take your life, then I judged that it would be ideal to pursue that plan.”

“.....Why?”

Sii, who was currently being held by Roroo, asked.

“.....Why would you do this?”

“For this city, wan.”

Roroo answered.

I was sad that I was incapable of being curious as to what sort of personal experience she had to go through in order for her to give that

sort of reply. Fortunately, there was a person here who wasn't as sullied as I was. Ariya panted.

“How is attacking Fair Grace, dragging Alshi into this, and trying to kill her for this city?”

“I have already sufficiently experienced the ruin that an otherworlder can bring to a city, wan.”

Her voice was low and cold. It wasn't because of her transformation.

“A lot of things, Ahyeon knew an incredible amount of things, wan.”

The particles of light gathered on Roroa's hand scattered. Within the dark room, a 3D projection of the City of Confinement was displayed.

“Many things, he tried to change an incredible number of things, wan.”

The additionally gathered green particles became buildings, markets, and the shape of small people. Each time Roroa moved her hand, that imaginary City of Confinement gradually became livelier. Roroa muttered in a voice that was like a shaman who was telling an ancient story.

“Many types of prejudice disappeared, wan. Things that were obvious stopped being obvious, and the things that weren't obvious became obvious, wan.”

The particles clumped together and created two small girls.

“My sister and I, were there, wan.”

Roroa gazed down at those girls.

“There was a future, wan. There was hope, wan. I believed

that the God whom I worship, Giant Molars, had sent an apostle, wan.”

A large mouth that stretched from one ear to the other. Her blade-like teeth were shining in the darkness.

“However, Ahyeon disappeared, wan.”

The green particles disappeared all at once.

The Saber-Fang girl in her unsheathed state looked terrifyingly large in this dark and small room. However, her eyes felt strangely small.

“Every change had stopped, wan. Everything that I dreamed for had disappeared like a mirage, wan. And this city became hideous like a building that had been abandoned in the middle of its construction. It had become an abandoned structure.”

Roroa turned towards Ariya.

“Ariya, you must surely remember the time back then. The time when your father was alive. You probably remember that shining period, wan. Compared to back then, how is the city now, wan? Miss Sophna is constantly shutting herself in her room and the esteemed daughter---Her Excellency became like that, wan.”

If they weren't able to see the future from the start.

If hope weren't shown to them.

If nothing had changed.

Aah, if it were like that, then they wouldn't have had any sorts of expectations.

“The funny thing is that I still loved that incomplete work,

wan.”

Roroo spoke sorrowfully.

“Any more breaking must be prevented. Wan. In order to do so, there is something that is as important as stopping an otherworlder before they’re able to spread more poison, wan.”

“You mean the security of the city.”

I uttered. Roroo tilted her head and looked down at me.

“That’s right, wan. Although I may be working, it’s true that things aren’t working properly. Miss Sophna, the Head Vassal, is always shut in her room and the Vice-captain, who’s right under her position, is busy playing around, wan. Normally, we’d still be able to operate well with this sort of system, but what do you think will happen if some misfortunate event were to perhaps happen, wan? Could a group of guards like this be able to guarantee the safety of the people, wan?”

Roroo ended adamantly.

“I require a role that is capable of moving the guards however I please, wan. After having even dragged the Orange Hawk Prince into this, everything was proceeding nicely, but I won’t let some spontaneous otherworlder whisk that all away from me, wan.”

“That’s why.”

While looking down at the claws that were aimed at her throat, Sii spoke.

“That’s why…… you tried to get rid of your rival for the sake of your own advancement, is that what you’re saying?”

Roroo spoke defensively.

“That’s too simplified, wan. I’m not a materialistic person, wan. It’s just, isn’t it natural for someone to pursue two or more goals while they’re already executing one, wan? Moreover, even if it’s me, do you think I’d enjoy killing other sentient beings? Yujin. You acted up too much, wan. Has no one advised you about this?”

Go get crushed somewhere. [\[1\]](#)

“If no one did, then it’s your fault for not having made friends well. Furthermore, you’re too smart, wan. These sorts of variables must be taken care of early on. It’s called an even greater righteousness, wan.”

“Righteousness!? With what mouth are you……!”

“Uh……!”

Sii’s groan forced Ariya to shut her mouth. Roroo was grabbing Sii’s right arm---the area where there was once a severed line.

“Miss Ariya, I beg of you, wan. Don’t act rashly. If this part of Miss Sii were to perhaps fall off again, then at that time, it’ll become more difficult to reattach. She could end up with a single arm for the rest of her life, wan, and it’ll be your fault. Wasn’t it enough that Alshi was wrapped into this because of you, wan?”

Ariya wasn’t able to even breathe properly.

“Alshi…… what you said earlier. What did you mean when you said that Alshi attacked Fair Grace for me?”

“I told her that you stole something again and that I possessed evidence that could prove it, wan. I told her that if she helped me, then I would destroy that evidence, wan. I wondered whether this could actually persuade her or not

even while I was telling her this, but it surprisingly did. Was it because I lived a good life until now? Wan, no. If you think about it, then it's because of your relationship as a couple. It isn't my fault that you lack dialogue and trust between the two of you....."

Before Ariya could even gnash her teeth, a pained cry burst out from Sii's mouth. Roroa acted as if she really didn't want to do this, but she was clearly twisting Sii's arm.

Sii uttered through her teeth.

"Certainly..... Certainly, the otherworlder called Ahyeon, who came here previously, brought a calamity to this city. You, he made you into a guard."

"Yes. And the otherworlder called Yujin, whom you stick around to so much, will make me into the vice-captain of the guards, wan."

"Since this much ruckus has occurred."

I spoke.

"It's enough for the mistrust towards the superior of the guards to come to the fore. It has actually been brought forward, too. Moreover, while in that situation, the incident where Alshi was stabbed had occurred. Despite that, despite having been warned only a short moment ago, Vice-captain Ryungste went to go drinking. Although it'll probably be impossible to take Sophna's position, you'll be able to at least seize Ryungste's position. Was that your plan?"

"Yes, Yujin. The fact that Her Excellency was angrier than I had imagined..... that was certainly my miscalculation, wan. One wrong move, and there was a chance that my head would have flown off. Wan. I really have to prevent that....."

Roroo looked worried. Ariya looked as if she had no idea how Roroo could make an expression like that in a situation like this.

I understood. Despite having untied the rope, the fact that she had waited for the perfect moment when Ariya charged at her, the fact that she waited and didn't miss out on her single chance, and the fact that she was able to run straight towards Sii despite having not taken off her blindfolds. The fact that she denied everything since the very beginning and even showed tears, this meant that within her mind she had been busily finding a path that would allow her to survive. Even while aware that she was scheduled to be in charge of the investigation, the fact that she had attacked after having prepared several layers of protection was a truth that I was already aware of.

“There are three facts that you all must know, wan.”

She spoke like a thorough advocate of self-protection.

“One is the fact that I have a soft spot in my heart for you all, wan. Another is the fact that I sympathize with you all, wan. The final fact is the truth that I feel apologetic towards you and you all, wan. I am not a coward. I am not garbage. I am not a beast who does not know how to empathize with others and understand their feelings, wan. I hope that you do not doubt this fact, wan. I pray that you do not doubt at least this sole fact, wan.”

“Only beasts say things like that.”

Silence.

“Although they blabber all sorts of splendid lines out of their mouths, they're fellows whose heads are only filled to the brim with the desire for their own profits. If it's not a match which they can win or if they didn't prepare an alternative, then they'll keep their mouths shut. A fellow who, despite knowing the situation of their old boss' daughter, will capture that girl regardless of that. Nevertheless, they're also fairly smart, fairly talented, and

they even possess luck. A fellow who's able to do the things that people would normally utter 'That much?' and hesitate to do. Although I believe that they're a possessor of a talent that's truly difficult to find elsewhere."

I spoke.

"Still, beasts cannot win against humans."

"Hu."

Roroo spat coldly and put more strength into her grip on Sii's arm. Sii cried out.

"W-Wait.....! W-What are you going to do!? You can't run away any....."

"If you're concerned about me, then it's fine, wan. Although I've been forced into a corner many times before, the God, Giant Molars, always shows the path to his believers. Yujin, I am absolutely not a beast, wan. You cannot win against me, wan."

The veins on the back of Roroo's hands, which were now covered in fur due to her now being in her unsheathed state, swelled up. As if she intended to twist Sii's arm off and toss it forward while pushing Sii herself back. As if she were going to escape the instant we became distracted by that arm and Sii.

Regardless, should I tell her the fact that she can't escape from the Earl's summoning ability? Even if she's somehow able to escape from the summon, should I mention that her little sister Kina will end up suffering instead? This probably won't work. Although she's displaying a baseless confidence, she isn't foolish enough to believe that she'd be able to shake off a summon.

This fellow's goal was to 'make us think that that was what she was planning to do'.

At least, her intention to tear off Sii's arm and pushing Sii back was probably right. However, she'll use that opportunity to charge forward and take all of our lives. Afterward, she'll use whatever trick that's available to her to kill the unconscious Alshi. That course of action would most likely hold a higher chance of her survival after all. Once I had thought that far.

"Yujin."

Sii spoke.

"Yes?"

I answered.

"I've been thinking about it, but, as I thought, I like you, Yujin."

Sii spoke.

"I know."

I answered.

Once more, many things happened.

"Aaaaaaaaaaah!!"

At the same instant Sii let out a cry, I tossed my iPad. Although Roroa tried to hit that aside with her free hand, in that very instant, Sii powerfully swung her right arm, which was being held, and freed herself from Roroa's grasp. "Kahak...!" A pained groan flowed out from Sii's mouth. She hunched over due to the severe pain emanating from the area where her arm was once cut, but she used her momentum and flung her body backward. Roroa, who had been struck on the pit of her stomach several times already, was forced to bend her back forward once she was hit by Sii's full strength tackle.

"This isn't.....!"

Roroa shouted. I then immediately pulled on the thing that I was

holding in my hand. Following that movement, one of Roroa's leg swung forward.

“Since the very beginning,” I spoke while holding onto the fishing line and hook that was hooked onto Roroa's pants. **“I didn't intend to bind you with just that rope.”**

Despite that, Sii being captured as a hostage was my mistake. Roroa didn't plan on missing that mistake of mine.

“Kuaaah……!”

Like how a person would try to clutch at straws when falling into water---the assistant commissioner of the City of Confinement, the Dog Knight of Justice, tried to grab Sii.

That arm, which was swung fully, missed its course as if it had collided against an unpredicted resistance.

“……!?”

Roroa looked down and shock spread across her eyes. The buttons that were sewed on into a single line. When a transformation occurs, the buttons were supposed to move according to how the lining on the uniform stretched out, albeit, even if they became deviated, they were supposed to stretch out just like that.

However, those buttons were currently entangled in a way that made them appear like some constellation. Roroa uttered.

“You…….”

I felt it when I witnessed Kina transform and I became certain once Roroa had explained it to me.

Kina's maid uniform and Roroa's guard uniform were made specifically for Saber-Fangs. In order for the clothes to not tear whenever they entered their unsheathed state, they were made with magic lining. Like the armor of a Saiyan, it changed in a way to

match the transformation of one's body.

However, not the buttons.

To be exact, the thread that was used to sew the buttons weren't like that. The deviation of the buttons happened because of that very reason. Since, compared to the expanding clothes, the thread that held the buttons did not stretch.

If the person who did the sewing was aware of that, then they could play a trick during that process that would work only a single time.

There was no need to explain all of this. The bottom of Ariya's shoe slammed into Roroa's face.

Bang.....!

Her body followed after her head, which was kicked like a soccer ball, before her pants got caught by the hook, forcing her down, and slamming the back of her head against the stone floor. Bang.....! Kah, Roroa cried out as she coughed out blood. Ariya leaped on top of that Roroa, grabbed her by the neck, and with her other hand aiming at Roroa's eyes, she---

“Stop!”

Ariya froze. With a desperate face, she turned to look at me. I spoke adamantly.

“We made a promise, Ariya, and you agreed to it, right?”

“.....Yes, that is the case.”

“Okay. Hold her like that.”

I immediately went to examine Sii's arm. It hadn't fallen off. Sii, although her face was still completely enveloped in pain, was strenuously displaying a smile to me.

All right. She was okay. That's a relief. If that was the case, then this was fine for now.

I walked towards Roroa and looked down at her.

“Roroa.”

Roroa struggled a couple of times in order to free herself from Ariya's hold, but she eventually gave up and sighed. She must have been unable to maintain her transformed state any longer as her body shrunk.

“Will I be tortured and executed now, wan……?”

“That may happen. That may not happen as well. Since you had put so much effort into temperamentally protecting yourself, there are a lot of choices available to us.”

“And because of Alshi, wan? I--- it won't work with me alone. Things like taking all of the blame isn't righteousness, wan. If I'm captured and questioned, then I'll have no other choice but to reveal the name of Alshi who had acted…….”

Roroa's words unnaturally came to a stop. Ariya had started to choke her so strongly that her nails were starting to dig into Roroa's skin. I, should have immediately made Ariya stop, but I waited for a moment. After that, I placed my hand on Ariya's shoulder and spoke.

“The investigation will end in smoke.”

After a momentary pause, I continued.

“I will make it happen. The Mage Tower seal I drew on that foolish will you left behind was for that purpose as well. To the Earl, the Mage Tower is a place she has some history with. Although the Earl absolutely isn't foolish, she's not that bright either. If we change the angle, then it isn't difficult to direct her towards a direction which we desire. Like what you had tried to do with us this entire time.”

“Uk…… kuh…….”

“Now then, once more…… the investigation will end in smoke. I will make it happen. After that, I plan to swallow up every circumstance that was mixed in with this case. Of course.”

“If…… wan, as long as I listen to your orders, Yujin. Is that it, wan?”

“Yup.”

I nodded.

“Like that, you will end up becoming the vice-captain just as you had desired. Mister Ryungste, although he appeared okay, he doesn’t seem appropriate for this situation. Even he seemed like he wanted to retire and live a free and easy retirement life. That’s why I’m telling you to become the vice-captain.”

“As I thought, Yujin, you want me to be the vice-captain of the guards who’s also nothing more than your puppet, wan?”

“Correct.”

I nodded. Roroa laughed hollowly.

“Who’s calling who a beast……?”

Roroa’s ears lightly fell down.

“Ariya can’t place her hands on me, wan. Because of Alshi. I can’t disobey you, wan. Because you’re holding onto my weakness. Alshi can’t report me, wan. Because you made this exchange while in front of Ariya. Since she has to protect Ariya. Even spiders wouldn’t be able to make a web that’s as elaborate as this, wan.”

“That’s right.”

By making people aim at one another while also holding onto each other’s weaknesses, in the end, no one will be able to move.

Within that, only I’ll be able to move freely.

In order to create this scenario, despite having already figured out the majority of the truth, I stayed silent until I had gathered all of the puzzle pieces. Due to that, Alshi had nearly died. If Alshi did actually die, then the wait would have been for naught and everything would have fallen apart. Nevertheless, I shouldered that risk.

The things that I had done to the point where I had gotten sick and tired of them during the 8 Years’ War, I had done them once more, and I’ll most likely continue to do them a countless number of times in the future.

“However, I can promise you two things. First, I’ll change this city.”

I spoke.

“I’ll fix the system and remove vices. I’ll solve the various issues that’ll most likely block my path during the process, and I’ll reform every unreasonable system. Finally, after all that, I’ll rehabilitate the Earl. I’ll leave a proper city in the hands of a proper leader. You can look forward to this.”

While peering into her eyes, I put more strength into my voice and continued.

“I’ll finish that incomplete work that had made you fall into despair.”

Roroa was unable to say anything for a while.

While averting her gaze, she spoke.

“.....What’s the second thing, wan?”

“Kina.”

Roroo lifted one ear. I spoke.

“Your little sister. Do you know what the real reason is as to why she holds such hostility towards me? It probably isn’t because she was worried that you’ll be taken away by an otherworlder again like you had said. In case her sister is betrayed again, devastated again, she’s trying to block me off beforehand.”

“So what.....?”

“What do you mean so what? It means that you’re a sociopath who didn’t feel any hesitation whatsoever even though you were pushing that little sister of yours, who was that concerned about you, into a situation where she would be bullied. However.”

I placed my hand on her forehead.

“That’s not all.”

It most likely wasn’t.

“Even for you, that most likely wasn’t everything.”

I spoke.

“I won’t disappear.”

Silence.

“That’s why, it’s fine for you to place your expectations on me.”

There was then another long silence.

“Roroa---Dog Knight of Justice, the next in line to be the vice-captain of the guards. What is your answer?”

“Wan…… do I even have any other choices?”

“No.”

“I understand, wan.”

I nodded. I then shook Ariya’s shoulder and made her step aside.

Ariya, looked up at me with an expression that showed that she had a lot of things to say. However, instead of saying them, the course of action she took was to wordlessly step to the side. Roroa sat up and looked up at me while folding down her ears.

“Although I was confident that I was smart, wan.”

Dog Knight of Justice. The girl, who was going to be my dog from now on, placed her small hand on top of my shoe.



“By the looks of it, it seems I was gifted with a fate that is unable to be rewarded, wan.”

I sat down on a chair, took off my shoes, and crossed my legs.

Roroa got down on one knee and placed her lips on the top of my foot.

Footnotes

1. [\[↑\]](#) This is a Korean slang that's used when telling someone to stop sticking out.



This world is cruel.

All words are cruel. Something like a gentle world only exists within creative works, and even those are gradually growing smaller in number. It's most likely because people are gradually losing their dreams. I had as well. Miracles are called miracles because they do not happen and hope is called hope because they are never achieved. Things do not come to fruition just because you wish for it to happen. You can't positively say that you'll one day be rewarded once you've endeavored long enough. This world was that cruel.

I thought that way.

I believed that was the case.

That's why, when a miracle had actually occurred, I was in a daze. Not a miracle that I had acquired through working hard, or a hope that had at least some realism to it, but the most irresponsible type of expectation. Since the miracle had suddenly appeared in the form of a transfer student, the flaming princess, my goddess, Chanmi, I had no other choice but to be in a daze.

However, that fact didn't make me into a believer of the bestseller *The Secret*. There were many cruel things that happened after that as well. I had personally committed some of the cruelest things among them. Regardless, it ended up being a type of revelation to me. Although this world was certainly cruel, it wasn't as cruel as I had thought it was. Although we were certainly filled with problems, we were capable of somehow improving those issues. Thus, there was no need to throw away all of your hope. Even if it hurts at times or you feel as if you'll die, you have to endure.

I thought that way.

I believed that was the case.

Because we are not beasts. As it was those very expectations, that very arrogance, that very source of all those suffering, and the very

thought that ‘things can’t continue like this’ that made us humans human, this will also continue to be the case.

The root of dignity was in Hell. However, it was thanks to that Hell that we’re able to see Heaven.



“It’s dangerous.”

Ariya spoke the instant Roroa had left the room.

“Fair Grace, it’s truly dangerous. That sort of trash…… that monster, can you trust her?”

“Among the people I’ve met ever since I’ve come to this world, she’s the type of person who can’t be trusted the most. I’ll tie her down as much as possible in order to restrict her freedom and keep watch over her so she isn’t able to do something foolish.”

“That isn’t enough…… we should kill her.”

I put my hand on Ariya’s mouth.

“You shouldn’t carelessly talk about taking the lives of others.”

“……Fair Grace.”

“I know. You’re probably worried about Alshi. It’s fine. Even if the worse situation were to occur, I’ll at least protect Alshi.”

Ariya pressed her hand against her forehead. The angle of her head, was a slight 27 degrees angle.

“Alshi, that idiot……. But Fair Grace…… Alshi isn’t the only

one I'm worried about."

"You're worried about me?"

"I'm also very slightly worried about Sii as well."

Sii's astonished expression was a bit interesting to look at.

"Of course, it's dangerous for Sii and me. But we'll have to endure it. If we're able to take hold of the guards with just this much risk, then this is on the cheap side."

Sii nodded as well. She must have felt pain from doing that action as she had let out a groan and held onto her arm. Ariya supported her in a panic and I,

"Yujin.....?"

while lowering my head, spoke.

"I apologize, Miss Sii. I should have prepared better."

"Eh, it's fine..... I'm, completely okay. Even before I was caught, I was already planning to do this if something like what happened earlier were to perhaps occur."

Planned.

"Mm~~ Yujin, you said it before, right? To think. If someone here were to perhaps become a hostage, then that'll be me since I'm the only one who's already injured."

Sii giggled.

.....

"This is why I can't help but have hope."

"Mm.....? What, do you mean?"

I answered her by kissing the back of her hand.

Sii's cheeks became flushed. Ariya lightly cleared her throat.

“Mm, in any case…… Fair Grace, and Sii. Why? Why exactly are you shouldering such a dangerous burden and taking the hands of the guards……. When you told Roroa that you'll change the city and rehabilitate Her Excellency the Earl…….”

“Mm~…… Yujin, should we give her an answer?”

“We should. Ariya is in the same boat as us now.” I turned back towards Ariya and spoke. **“As you heard, I'm going to rehabilitate the Earl.”**

I then explained.

“Everything she has done until now. We'll make her take those sins to heart. We'll make her plead that she won't do them ever again. We'll make her give a sincere apology and atone for all of the crimes she had committed throughout her life. In order to do that, we intend to shoulder this dangerous burden.”

“…….” Ariya looked back and forth between me and Sii. **“……Is that so.”**

“Yup. Moreover, since you've heard about our plan now, I'd like it if you cooperated with us. Once Alshi wakes up, explain everything to her. We'll also match our stories regarding the attackers. We'll start off with things like that.”

I believed that she wouldn't refuse. It wasn't only because of the favor that I had done for her. It wasn't also because of the pretext of rehabilitating the Silver Lion Earl. Just as Roroa had said, we already made her witness us making a secret deal with Roroa. Like we had reminded her more than anything else during that exchange, her lover, Alshi's life was on the line here.

An accomplice mentality and compulsory power that was incomparable to what she had felt when watching something like hidden cameras together. Ariya betraying us in a situation like this, at the very least, I believed that it wouldn't happen.

However, Ariya was unable to nod her head readily and instead hesitated.

“But I…….”

The instant Ariya had mumbled that, the closed door swung open and a shadow entered the room.

It was a long shadow.

It smelled like wet grass. Before the backlight could even fade away, Ariya was the first one to utter the name of the owner of the shadow.

“Miss Sophna…….”

“M-Miss Sophna! Welcome.”

“You may stay seated.”

Sophna stopped Ariya and Sii, who were both about to stand up, with her staff and approached us. Once more, her figure reminded me of a willow tree. There was a befitting cheerful smile lingering on her lips.

“Kuhuhu. You're just as I had heard. For you to not panic upon my arrival and also have the leisure to examine me.”

“And you're different from what I've heard. They said you were a hikikomori so I had a darker image of you in my head.”

“If I did, then would I not overlap with Yudia?”

“Are you not allowed to overlap?”

“Ahyeon had claimed that that was the case.”

I shut my mouth. With a gaze that felt like a pine tree that was growing on the very summit of a mountain and gazing over the horizon, Sophna spoke.

“My, Mii, and Zia’s ways of speech in Korean were most likely for that purpose. When learning a new language, it means that you’re able to become a new character in a new genre. If possible, it’d be good if that didn’t overlap, is what he had told us.”

This was something that I had heard from the Earl before.

Rather than that, Mii---was probably the Earl.

Sii, Mii…… No, it wasn’t a naming sense that I couldn’t understand, but…….

“Ahyeon may be gone, but that desire of his is still maintained. Even when Azure Rose and I taught the illegitimate child of the young master, Brown Lion, the Korean language, we placed an emphasis on creating a sort of character trait. In Korea, this is referred to as ‘he may have gone, but I did not send him’, right?”

“Finally, I’ve met someone who’s interested in normal literature.”

“I cannot help but have a preference towards poetry. In any case---seeing that you are not showing much surprise, were you expecting my arrival?”

“Of course not. I never imagined that you would come here so soon. However, I did see that you came up from your room.”

I glanced at Ariya.

“I have heard the term ‘an unpredictable person’.”

Sophna laughed with a ‘kahaha’ once she heard that I had at least readied myself to meet her. She then slowly walked towards me.

“So,” Sophna pushed the end of her staff against my chin. “Can you predict the reason why I am here?”

“Most likely to pass your judgment on me.”

“Bingo.” Sophna turned towards Ariya. “Although I did send Ariya with the purpose of keeping an eye on you, as I thought, the final decision should be made by myself.”

Ariya couldn’t understand Korean. However, she most likely was able to guess at what Sophna had said when she turned to look at her. After looking at the guilt spread across Ariya’s face for a moment, I spoke.

“Did I pass?”

“What makes you think that?”

Sophna retorted immediately. There was no doubt that she had contemplated a lot beforehand in preparation to respond to this question. And, as expected, I had also contemplated a lot beforehand in preparation to respond to this retort.

“The fact that you came here to meet me,” I started off. “is because you felt that it would be fine to leave me at the Earl’s side, right?”

“Huu, what to do? To be exact, it’s the complete opposite reason of that.”

“The opposite?”

“That is right. If you’ve lived for as long as I have, then you will have witnessed a countless number of occasions where scars are reopened after someone needlessly gets involved when it could have just been left alone. Like a certain letter, and recently, ah, yes, like the medicine for one’s own mother.”

Both Sii and Ariya drew back their heads. The eyes of Sophna, who had glanced at the two girls once, became dim like that of a frog.

“So, Korean child. I have started to harbor the same belief towards you as well. The fact that you are going around this castle freely…… how should I say it?”

Get crushed somewhere. Mari. You gave me quite the vital piece of advice. ***Get crushed somewhere.*** However, I still can't listen to that advice.

“What is it?”

“Hm, think of it like this. You are a foreign substance. A foreign substance from another world, at that.”

Each time she said the phrase ‘foreign substance’, Sophna pronounced it in a way that sounded as if an overripe fruit had fallen and hit the floor.

“Someone like that is next to Mii and Azure Rose. Moreover, they're outspoken and go around making their own faction. In the eyes of an elder like myself, hm, it isn't very pleasing. Who knows what sort of negative influence you'll have on them.”

“You said Ahyeon was like that as well.”

“That's right. You are also not Ahyeon. If I were to add something else, then even when Ahyeon was here, I played the role as the final boulder for quite a long period of time. Kuhuhu. You should be aware since you've seen her for yourself, but all of Our Lordship's screws are loose, so shouldn't someone take the role as the skeptic?”

As Sophna spoke, she put more strength into the staff that was pressing against my chin. My head was forcefully pushed back and like a crescent looming over an old tree on a foggy day, her eyes shined brightly within the hazy darkness.



“That’s why, Yujin.”

After calling my name, Sophna spoke.

“I’ll ask you, why shouldn’t I kill you---”

She tilted her head in a way that felt like a crooked reed that was being blown by a breeze.

“And, after concluding that stability has returned to this Silver Lion Castle, return back to my research room with a peace of mind?”

The sound of a gasp. The sound had come from Sii. Ariya was wordless. I couldn’t confirm her expression either. The strength that Sophna was putting into her staff was becoming stronger. I wasn’t allowed to do anything other than look at Sophna’s face and it was also becoming physically exhausting.

“The fact that you’re saying this,” I spoke. “must mean that you’re still hesitating.”

“You are right. I shouldn’t make rash decisions. **Ariya Orgit.**”

The instant Ariya flinched, a cluster of light burst out from the end of Sophna’s hand and wrapped around Ariya.

“Even the slightest lie shall not be forgiven.”

After declaring so, Sophna continued.

“I shall ask you under the name of the most ancient tree, according to your observations, this boy, is this individual known as Yujin a harmless existence with no malice whatsoever? In other words, are you certain that he is an existence that will cause no harm to Her Excellency the Silver Lion Earl?”

“Miss Sophna! That’s…….”

Sophna didn’t even act as if she had heard Sii’s cry.

“Answer me. I shall count down from 3. 3.”

Both Sii and Ariya made eye contact.

“2.”

Ariya looked at me.

“1.”

And finally, Ariya Orgit opened her mouth---



[Short Story]
The Story of the Saber-Fang Girl

[단편] 검아족 소녀의 이야기

Roroa Ara Harte shouted.

“Wan! What’s the meaning of this!?”

The branch manager of the Black Dragon Street that was within Water Dragon City, Loumbre, laughed while exposing his teeth.

“What do you mean? I’m putting you in prison.”

“My little sister! Didn’t you say that you’ll release my little sister, wan!?”

“Haha! Do you think a human would keep their promise with a dog?”

“You! Waan! I won’t forgive you, wan!”

“So what if you won’t forgive me? You sisters should just prepare to receive customers!” Loumbre tapped on the shoulder of the man standing beside him. “Ma, keep guard!”

Loumbre left while letting out a crude laugh. The bearded Thumb department head of the Black Dragon Street branch that was within Water Dragon City brushed off his shoulder with a sullen face.

“Tsk. Stay there obediently. I may like dogs, but I absolutely hate being bitten by one.”

“Senior, please release me!”

“What are you talking about? You should be aware of that baldy’s personality. He won’t change his mind even if ten fingers were to go up on the throne.”

“Do you plan to abandon me, wan!? Even though we’ve worked together for several years!”

“Do you think the black would rub off if two Black Dragons rubbed against one another for a couple of years? Sorry, but my life comes first.”

Roroa became enraged and shifted into her unsheathed state. With three times her original height, and two times her original physique, she rushed at the bars and swung at them. Bang……! A loud boom echoed but the bars didn't even shake. The Thumb department head made a pitiable face.

“This is technology from the Lunar Origin Vault. Do you think it'd break just because you hit it?”

“Gauu! This…… this is taking it too far, wan!”

“In the first place, we became Black Dragons because we took it too far.”

Although he was talking coldly, secretly, the Thumb department head agreed with Roroa. Of course, that baldy always took it too far, and it was thanks to that that he was able to become the branch manager of the Black Dragon Street in this city, but this was too much.

It didn't make sense since the part where he had taken Roroa's little sister as a hostage. Instead of giving a reward to Roroa, who had completed her mission, there was nothing that could be said about the fact that she was instead imprisoned and told that she was going to be sent to a whorehouse at the Cat Palatinate. However, the thing that was the most excessive was the mission that Roroa was pressured into carrying out.

The Thumb department head let out a sigh and looked further into the prison cell that Roroa was imprisoned in.

A single man was leaned against a wall while unconscious. His thick-rimmed glasses, disorganized beard, and sharp facial lines made him give off the air of a scholar. He had an appearance that you couldn't possibly say was similar to the brawler Thumb department head, even as empty talk.

Regardless, the issue wasn't because of that atmosphere, but rather, the man's appearance was different from the Thumb department

head on a more fundamental level. Once he regains his consciousness and opens his eyes, then it would become even clearer. If this man were a human, then this man should have the ‘inner eyes’ which everyone naturally had. The kidnapped man wasn’t a normal human.

He was an otherworlder who had been summoned from another world.

The baldy had put his hands on the Silver Lion, the esteemed daughter’s retainer.

“He was probably blinded by the reward that the Mage Tower offered, but…… what does he intend to do by doing this? They say the esteemed daughter of the Earl is able to summon anything before her…….”

“Uuh…… nothing particular should happen for the time being, wan. There are 13 days left until the esteemed daughter can use her summons again. The Mage Tower will most likely try to obtain as much information as they can from the otherworlder before then, and they will obtain it, wan. The otherworlder will then be immediately discarded.”

“Who said I was talking about the otherworlder? I’m talking about us. If they find out that the Black Dragon Street was involved, then can you imagine how that record-breaking esteemed daughter will rage…… that baldy, don’t tell me he doesn’t plan on doing business here anymore?”

“That’s probably the case, wan. He knows how much the Mage Tower is aiming for otherworlders. The baldy will receive that much profit as well, and he’ll be able to fill his quota to get a promotional transfer to the headquarters of the Black Dragon Street, wan.”

“And the people remaining here will have to take care of the aftermath. This is insane…… but why did you do something like this?”

“Waan! Are you making fun of me!? Kina was captured as a hostage, wan! Do you think I had any other choice, wan!?”

The Thumb department head clicked his tongue.

“You shouldn’t have tried to become a Claw Black Dragon in the first place. If you had just become a Scale Black Dragon, went to the Cat Palatinate on your own two feet, and spread your legs for some pervert with a preference towards kids, then you would be living better than now.”

“Wan! Bite off all Twelve Fingers!”

Roroo struck the ground. Even after her transformation had ended, she continued to hit the floor. She was upset. She was upset that she couldn’t rescue her little sister. She was upset that she was used and she was upset that she had ended up in this situation. She was upset that there was no other choice but for this to happen. Although there hadn’t been a single moment in her life where she thought she was emotional, just this time, she couldn’t suppress her emotions.

“Wan! Waan……!”

How did things end up like this? Roroo looked back at the life she had lived.



Among the tribes of the Saber-Fangs, Roroo was born within the Tribe of Drooping Ears. Within the territory of the Lion Palatinate, the slums in the southwest region of Water Dragon City, and among those slums, the residence that was isolated as a place where only non-humans gathered to live, she was born in a place called the Claw Nest. Her family lived alongside the Cold-blooded Tribe(冷血簇, Kubera’ kan), who had scales growing out of their bodies, and the Winged Steed Tribe(馬翼簇, Orabia), who had wings like horses.[\[1\]](#)

Although the majority of the days there were peaceful, occasionally, when the human administrator came to collect the tax, the atmosphere would become grim. That caught the mind of the young

Roroo.

“Why do we pay tax, wan?”

“Since we’re living in their city.”

Roroo’s grandmother, Morba, answered. Her white hair displayed how old she was.

“Waan! Why do we live in their city, wan? Can’t we live outside of the city, wan?”

“The outside is dangerous. There are monsters after all.”

“Monsters! Wan, are they scary?”

“They’re wicked.”

Grandmother Morba spoke. Although Roroo was still at an age where she couldn’t understand the implicative meaning behind that response, she could at least understand one thing.

“So you’re saying that instead of living while being harassed by monsters, we’ll be better off living while paying taxes. Wan. Since money is a cheaper price than our lives.”

Grandmother Morba smiled.

“I see you have a head that’s as sharp as your teeth. Being able to bite lean meat isn’t something that just anyone can do.”

However, Grandma Morba had said that idiom without knowing the essence of Roroo. Once Roroo grew up and started to do her own portion of the work, she felt as if she had been on the short end of the stick. Even if she were to live while being harassed by monsters, she was confident that at least she would survive. Why did they have to give money to the people who wouldn’t be able to survive?

Roroo didn’t try to go further into this. She knew that if she brought this up, then that would put her at a disadvantage.

Instead, she chose to ask in a roundabout way.

“Wan. About Mr. Arbere.”

“That playboy?”

Harisa, who was Roroo’s sister from the same mother, asked back while trimming Roroo’s ears. Roroo raised her head and looked up at Harisa.

“Wan, yes. Doesn’t that person eat and live well even though he doesn’t work? Even his scales are blue.”

“Since he has wealth.”

“Yes. There are rich people like that who have wealth among the Cold-blooded Tribe and the Winged Steed Tribe, right? I also heard that there are people like that among the humans as well. But why don’t we have someone like that, wan?”

“If there’s a rich person, then that means that there are ten times the number of poor. Those people don’t care if their fellow kin die as long as it means that they can live an abundant life, so that’s why they’re able to live such terrible lives.”

It seems like an awesome life. Roroo did not say this out loud.

“So you’re saying that in comparison to them, we live while sharing everything among one another, wan?”

“Yup. Since that is the will of the Giant Molar. Work together, share together. Thanks to that, no one starves to death. You work while you’re young and feed the pups and you’ll be supported once you’ve grown old. It doesn’t have to be solely food, but items as well. It’s a good thing since a person in need can use something whenever they want to, and it’s also a good thing because fleas won’t form in the items or our fur. How reasonable is that?”

“What if we don’t have enough food, wan?”

“Then at that time, the older one has to bear with it. For example, if it’s just you and me, then I’ll be the one who has to endure. If it’s just you and Kina, then you’ll be the one who has to endure.”

What if you don’t want to endure? Roróa did not ask this out loud.

“What happens if you obtain an item that’s so precious that you can’t share it with anyone else, wan?”

“Is there anything in the world that’s more precious than your kin?”

Roróa realized that she wasn’t going to be able to understand her kin. Her kin weren’t going to be able to understand her either.

The only person who was able to even slightly notice Roróa’s true essence was Grandma Morba.

“I see you have a head that’s sharper than your teeth.”

Grandma Morba said words that were slightly different compared to before and spoke as if she were sighing in grief.

“No matter how sharp one’s teeth are, they will break if they come in contact with bones. Although that head of yours may save you from an abundance of crises like a well-held sword would, at times, it’s because of that very reason that you’ll end up calling upon trouble. I shall one day tell you how to sheathe that blade of yours.”

However, before that day could arrive, Roróa had run away from the Claw Nest.

Roróa, who had come out to the urban district, was filled to the brim with hope. However, there was a limit to what she could do in the city as she was not a human. For starters, the deeply rooted scorn towards other races held her down by the ankles.

“I’d rather use orphans than hire you. At least those kids are human.”

The next thing that had caught her by the ankles was her small frame that didn't reach even 1 meter tall.

"Can you even wash dishes like that? Didn't you say that you're unable to stay transformed all the time?"

Her young appearance held her down as well.

"21 years old? As I can tell by your brown hair? Even if you tell me that, I have no idea."

There were people who wanted her. A merchant smiled broadly as he massaged his ample stomach.

"It can't be done here. We can't openly do business. His Excellency the Brown Earl is strict about strange things. But you know? Let's say that you go all the way to the Cat Palatinate. The demand for your current figure and even your unsheathed state in the whorehouses over there is....."

A certain leader of a circus said this while showing off his muscular body.

"People desire to see rare exhibitions. 'The Rare Tent of Treasures', which I, Barze, manage, provides that. Fruit plucked from the Tribe of Soaring Trees. From the 5th generation of a pioneer village---of course, it's the 5th generation of an unlicensed pioneer village, a living leather taiz. We even have a hand that belonged to royal blood. Although Saber-Fangs aren't really rare exhibits, if you follow our training well, then I might be able to give you a job as one of our choreographers. Albeit, you won't be paid and you'll have to live in the training camp until you're able to pull your own weight."

Roroo refused them both. Although she didn't have any resistance towards selling her own body, the Cat Palatinate was a place that had so many disturbing rumors that it made even Roroo, who had just come up to the city, reluctant to approach. On the other hand, she had no idea how long it'd take before she'd be able to receive a proper pay from the circus.

Roroo wanted to quickly become rich. Ironically, the ability that came with being the kin of Gainu Warmon, the God of Equality who had a doctrine that was the complete opposite of her desire, helped her. Around the vicinity of Water Dragon City, there were several labyrinths that had never been traversed before. Roroo was able to construct an elaborate database and record maps. The fact that Roroo could also enter her unsheathed state whenever she was in danger was a factor that added points as well.

The leader of the adventurer group ‘Gold Beard’, Rihitle Odeon, spoke while touching his golden beard which was the origin of his party name.

“I have no interest in your race. I am only interested in whether you’re able to do your job properly or not.”

However, Rihitle was actually incredibly interested in Roroo’s race. He spoke adamantly when they discovered a fist-sized piece of gold while exploring the labyrinth known as the ‘Lamenting Mine’ which was used as a waste water disposal facility for the Mining Industry District.

“You do not have the right to have this. This is for humans after all. If you have a problem, then file a petition at the government office.”

The very right to file a petition at the government office was only for humans. The Saber-Fang Roroo didn’t have the qualification itself to even request for someone to mediate. Non-humans were always in the position of living in this Water Dragon City on rent. You could say there was a reason why they gathered in an isolated area in the slums.

At the time, the reason why Roroo didn’t go towards the Black Dragon Street like most people would often do once they’ve been turned away by the governmental powers, was because the retentive memory which Roroo was born with was warning her that if she stepped in there once, then she won’t be able to ever come out again. However, once similar occurrences happened over and over again,

she could no longer bear it.

The Black Dragon Street didn't care about the circumstances of another race that received racial discrimination, but they were very interested in the treasure that the party of adventurers had discovered and the inner details that were given to them by Roroa. Roroa had received money. It was a sum that she had grasped for the first time ever since she came out to the city of humans. When you look at it as compensation for the new quagmire she was entering, the money also seemed lacking.

“You know, there's a thing about us. We've helped people who weren't humans. We've even slipped them some money. Because they were pitiable, while also betraying our fellow humans. Do you know why? It's because we're Black Dragons. Anyone can be a Black Dragon, and the Black Dragon is everyone. In other words, shouldn't you repay the favor for the other Black Dragons as well?”

Regardless of how smooth those words were, Roroa had no other choice. No adventurer party would accept Roroa who had sold information to the Black Dragon Street. Once she had come to her senses, Roroa realized that the only people who would give her work were the Black Dragon Street. Although she was able to live normally with the pay she got from the Black Dragon Street, she became unable to pursue anything higher than that.

The most depressing thing was the fact that she had predicted this situation. She didn't want to go to the Black Dragon Street because she knew this would happen.

It was similar to the stifling sensation you'd get when playing a game of chess where your defeat was already certain, and yet you weren't allowed to stop playing midway through and were forced to continue. Kina had left the slums and came looking for her when that feeling was at its zenith.

“Woof! It's been a long time, big sis!”

“.....Why have you come here, wan?”

Roroa was exhausted. Although Kina felt puzzled after seeing Roroa in this sort of state for the first time, she soon spoke spryly.

“Woof! Grandma Morba sent me! She told me to become big sis’ sheathe!”

Sheathe? Roroa recalled the words that Grandmother Morba had told her. ‘I shall one day tell you how to sheathe that sword of yours.’ Nagging that was unique to white hairs. Annoying and boundlessly bothersome words of wisdom. It wasn’t even funny. For them to send this idiot to her. Roroa wanted to tell Kina that she had no intention of shouldering baggage like her and that she should immediately return to the Claw Nest. No, there was no need to even say it. She could lock the door and shut herself in. The idiot Kina would loiter around the streets for a while and be sold off to the Cat Palatinate before even three days. Roroa could also be the one to sell Kina off herself. If she wanted to become rich, then she had to use whatever means necessary.

There was a single problem. She couldn’t become rich. She wasn’t capable of becoming rich from now on either.

“Woof…… big sis?”

And she was tired.

“……Woof.”

Kina, who had been looking at Roroa anxiously, carefully placed her hand on top of Roroa’s head. Roroa pulled Kina into a hug and trembled.

Time flowed by. Roroa kept Kina with her. Kina was one of the very few people who didn’t harbor malice towards Roroa, and she was the sole person who would never become Roroa’s enemy. A tranquilizer.

“I welcome you as a formal member of the Black Dragon Street.”

“Woof. Big sis. Do you want a shoulder massage?”

“Two harlots from Ordon Halzum’s place ran away. This is a problem that’s related to our honor.”

“Woof. Big sis. I made the food.”

“Our task this time is to show hell to the bastards over at the House of Palcan. For them to try and use the water by themselves during this period, how absurd.”

“Woof. Big sis. A letter came from big sis Harisa!”

“They say the eldest son of the House of Naricpitor caused an accident again. The person directly involved in that accident, the maid of the Cold-blooded Tribe, is saying that she won’t get rid of the egg. Sir Zaho clearly said that he did not wish for something like a grandchild with scales…….”

“Woof. Big sis, Mr. Barze taught me a new dance today! Want to see?”

This child was my tranquilizer. Roroo tried to assert it as so. However, deep down, she knew that Kina was an existence that was greater than that. In the end, this fact was proven once several years had flowed by and Kina was captured as a hostage, forcing Roroo to do something insane like place her hands on the otherworlder who belonged to the Silver Lion esteemed daughter. How could she have ended up imprisoned in this cell and hitting the floor?

“Damn it! Damn it……!”

Even though she had a feeling that that baldy wouldn’t keep his promise. But for her to still have no other choice but to do this. Roroo was so upset that she couldn’t contain it. From the very beginning, she shouldn’t have done things that didn’t suit her. Or she should have just done things that didn’t suit her from the very beginning.

If she didn’t leave the Claw Nest. If she had just lived with her kin. If she did.

“Wan……! Shit……!”

“Hey, you’ll hurt your hand.”

“Who cares, wan! I can’t use these hands from now on any…….”

Roroa shut her mouth. Once she raised her head, she could see the otherworlder scratching the back of his head.

“……You woke up, wan?”

“You should be able to tell just by looking at me. Mm, your name. It was Miss Arba, right?”

Roroa recalled that she had told him a fake name. She didn’t feel the need to fix that.

“Wan. It would have been better if you stayed passed out longer, wan. You’ll be knocked out again anyway once the baldy comes back, wan.”

“I would have liked to as well. But my head kept ringing. Miss Arba kept hitting the floor after all. My name is Ahyeon. Show me your hand for a moment.”

The otherworlder, Ahyeon, spoke while walking towards her. After glancing at the slim hand stretched out towards her, Roroa bared her teeth.

“Grrrr…… are you pitying me, wan?”

Ahyeon looked down at Roroa before getting down on one knee. He grasped Roroa’s small hand and opened it before gently rubbing the torn areas on the back of her hand with his handkerchief. Roroa was about to shake his hand off but dropped her shoulders instead . It was half because she didn’t feel the need to do that, and the other half was because she could enter her unsheathed state whenever she wanted in order to slam this otherworlder into the floor.

“How is it now?”

Ahyeon asked. Roroa growled.

“It’s painful, wan.”

“I did that as punishment. Now you shouldn’t thoughtlessly hit the back of another person’s head. Okay?”

Roroa stared at the otherworlder with her mouth hanging open. Ahyeon flashed her a grin and took something out of his pocket.

“Now I’ll treat you.”

“.....What’s that, wan?”

“Medicine from my world. It’s called Madecassol.”

Roroa quietly watched Ahyeon squeeze the ointment out and rub it on the back of her hand. It had a peculiar scent that felt like she was forcing herself to breathe through her nostrils even though they were clogged. The otherworlder finished it off by wrapping some adhesive band called a band-aid on top of the area where the ointment was applied.

“Now then, it’ll become better now. Probably.”

Roroa wanted to ignore the last word that Ahyeon had added. The sudden question that popped up in her head prevented her from doing so.

“Does the medicine from your world work on the people in this world, wan?”

“It worked. Although I’m not sure if it’ll work on a Saber-Fang.”

“Isn’t that the important part, wan!?”

“Eeh but~ there were no Saber-Fangs around me. Honestly, the first Saber-Fang I ever got to talk to was Miss Arba.....”

“So was it an experiment under the pretense of treatment, wan!?”

“It’ll be fine, really.”

Ahyeon let out a hearty laugh and scratched the back of his head. Roroa, who was chuckling while showing her teeth, could feel her strength slowly escape from her body. It didn’t matter anymore. This otherworlder was soon going to become a test subject for the Mage Tower, and she and her sister were going to be dragged to the Cat Palatinate. She…….

“So, Miss Roroa Ara Harte. Why did you kidnap me?”

Roroa froze. Ahyeon was still looking at her with a humorous smile on his face.

Shortly after, Roroa spoke.

“You know my name?”

“Yes. Although I’ve never met one before, I’ve been planning something that involves the Saber-Fangs. So the ghettos within the city, ah, ghettos are what you call those isolated areas. In any case, the Claw Nest, right? There was a need for me to get a grasp on the Saber-Fangs who lived there and the people who came out to the city area---Well, it’s like that. Sir Zaho and Miss Sophna combined their strengths and somehow did it. I think this was about 4 days ago.”

“So you’re saying that you followed me even though you were aware that I gave you a fake name, wan?”

“Tell me the reason. Why did you do it?”

“You should be able to guess that by now! The Mage Tower wants--
-.”

“I know that. I’m asking for the reason why Miss Roroa kidnapped me.”

Ahyeon spoke calmly. Compared to when she was talking with the Thumb department head earlier, the aspect of this conversation was the complete opposite. Still, Roroa found a certain comical factor in the fact that, instead of the person who she had suffered together with for the past several years, the person who she had tricked and kidnapped was the one showing more concern for her.

Roroa didn't have an emotional personality. However, she was not a monster who couldn't feel emotions either. She wasn't a sociopath who smirked at warm hearts and took advantage of kindness.

Not yet.

“.....My little sister was imprisoned.”

“Do you mean Miss Kina?”

Since he knew her name, it was obvious that he would know her little sister's name as well.

“Yes. That's why.

“That's why you did this to me.”

“I have no intention to apologize, wan.”

“I don't plan on receiving an apology either. Rather than that, since Miss Roroa is here, that must mean the trade didn't end well.”

“The baldy broke his promise, wan.”

Roroa gnashed her teeth.

“It's something I've experience all the time ever since I came out from the slums, wan. Humans always break their promises and lie, wan. They don't see me, us as equals. Although my greed can also be put to blame for the situation becoming like this, if I were a human, then this would have never happened, wan. This city, your city is so sullied that even a Giant Molar cannot set root here, wan.”

“That’s right. There is that sort of problem. It seems this city especially is conservative. According to Miss Mii, she said that it was because of the location, but that doesn’t work as an excuse. Since it’s something that must not be done anywhere or by anyone.”

Ahyeon pleasantly agreed to her before placing his hand on Roroa’s shoulder.

“That’s why I’m going to fix this.”

“.....Fix it, what are you talking about, wan?”

“Things like people’s gazes, the trends, the atmosphere, and the ghettos.”

Ahyeon stuck out his chest and spoke.

“I’ll make the things that were obvious into the things that aren’t obvious.”

Roroa looked up at Ahyeon. With a confident look on his face, Ahyeon had one hand on his hip while his other hand was pointing up towards somewhere.

Once more, Roroa did not have an emotional personality. However, as expected, she wasn’t a monster either, so she didn’t say ‘What is this lunatic saying? We’re currently locked up and we’ll be meeting our ends soon’ out loud.

“How do you plan to do that, wan? We’re currently imprisoned---.”

“Great Rending Slice!”

The sound of thin air being cracked open resonated.

Roroa flinched and turned around to see the bars cut in half and a girl standing there with her sword swung while also panting. She seemed to be in her early teens. Although she had an unfriendly appearance, her waist-length blue hair soaked in sweat slightly went

against that impression. Roroa recognized her.

“.....The Silver Lion esteemed daughter’s knight?”

“I am Zia Batsand Naricpitor, a squire.” Just like the rumors had said, she spoke politely and formally. “Ahyeon, I have come looking for you.”

Ahyeon grinned and spoke to Zia---in a strange language that Roroa couldn’t understand. Zia responded in a similar sounding language. Like that, after watching the two of them talk back and forth with one another, Roroa soon realized something.

“You let yourself be caught on purpose, wan.”

Ahyeon glanced at Roroa and laughed.

“Though I didn’t think I’d be hit this strongly.”

Roroa recalled the words that Ahyeon had said. That he had investigated the Saber-Fangs. That he knew her real name and the name of her little sister. Then he should also know that she’s a part of the Black Dragon Street. But why? Ahyeon must have noticed her confusion as he let out a hollow laugh.

“We required a justification to go against the Black Dragon Street.”

“.....So you’re saying that you put up with this risk just for that, wan?”

“It’s not ‘just that’. If you wish to make something obvious into something that isn’t obvious, then you must first reach your hand out towards the people who are treated as if that fact is obvious, the alienated class.”

Although Roroa couldn’t understand the meaning of those words, there was one fact that she understood. The alienated class was gathered in the Black Dragon Street.....

“My little sister! My little sister is in another…….”

“Do not worry. Shyuriok should have handled it.”

Roroa was aware that the individual known as Shyuriok was another otherworlder who the Silver Lion esteemed daughter had summoned. The reason why she had panicked even more was also because of that very fact. Zia Batsand Naricpitor fiddled with her waist-length blue hair and reiterated her words.

“Do not worry. Different from the rumors, Shyuriok isn’t dangerous. Probably.”

“That doesn’t make me feel at ease though, wan!?”

“Rather, Ahyeon. What should we do about that?”

“Wait, don’t ignore me, wan!”

Zia ignored Roroa and dragged ‘that’ here. To be exact, it was the Thumb department head of the Black Dragon Street who had vacated his position earlier. Seeing that several portions of his clothes were melted off and the fact that his entire body was captured within some sort of phlegmatic substance, it was obvious that he had been done in by Shyuriok.

“Kuh……. kill me!”

“I serve the esteemed daughter, and it seems she does not wish for people to die if possible.”

Zia had spoken in a contemplating voice and both the Thumb department head, who had tried to show his resolve, and the watching Roroa became panicked. Only Ahyeon alone was able to maintain his composure as if he were accustomed to this.

“What is your name?”

“Uh……. are you referring to me?”

“Yes. Your name. What is it?”

“They call me Borg.”

Ahyeon opened his eyes wide.

“Borg? The one who became a title possessor in his teens and got up to an executive seat?”

Borg’s face became slightly red with embarrassment.

“That’s a tale from the past. Even if I’m an executive, I’m currently just a Thumb department head. Although ‘thumb’ may sound extravagant, if you open your hand, then it’s the shortest.”

“Hm. Okay, Mr. Borg. From this moment forth, you’ve become the branch manager of the Black Dragon Street of this city.”

Due to the words that were like a bolt from the blue, Borg’s mouth fell open.

“What?”

“Since the current bald branch manager won’t do for several different reasons, you’ll be taking his place in his stead, Mr. Borg.”

“That’s not how the Black Dragon Street…….”

“Miss Mii will be negotiating with the headquarters of the Black Dragon Street in regard to that.”

Borg fell into thought. The Black Dragon Street had received a request from the Mage Tower and kidnapped an otherworlder who belonged to the Earl’s esteemed daughter. With the intention of demanding compensation, the Lion Earl would have the right to request for a branch manager who is within their influence. In other words…….

“There are regulations that need to be upheld.”

“This teacher is quite delighted that you’re a fast learner. Miss Mii will give you the details.”

“I’ll think about it. When will you wash this disgusting phlegm off of me?”

“Wait 3 hours and they’ll fall off on their own. Mostly.”

Borg cursed. Zia dragged away that Borg.

Ahyeon stretched and turned back to Roroa.

“Now then, shall we go?”

Roroa let out a sigh.

“What you said earlier…… The reformation, you really intend to do it, huh.”

“Ei, is there such a thing as a fake reformation? There probably is, but this teacher doesn’t raise things like that.”

“……When you said the reformation was related to the Saber-Fangs, what did you mean, wan?”

“You should be able to take a guess.”

Ahyeon straightened his voice.

“There’s a theory on evolution in my world. Crazy people believe that this is what separates the superior people from the inferior people. In other words, they’re using discrimination as a basis. But those people are saying that without even knowing what the ‘evo’ in evolution means. The theory of evolution simply refers to the lifeforms that were able to overcome their environments in order to survive and the form they took in order to achieve that.”

Ahyeon adjusted his glasses and spoke in a voice that really stuck to one’s ears.

“Of course, you can add your own interpretations there. However, not in a way that flatters the strong who obtained supremacy in the ecosystem, but in a way that praises the weak. Science is something that humans made for humans. So if I were to make an assumption on your race according to that knowledge of mine, then your race’s true nature is peace. As a result of avoiding fruitless fights and raising your swords only when you had no other choice, you’ve evolved into this current form. As you are a race that possesses that much dignity and intelligence, you are a race who must obviously be treated with respect.”

Ahyeon put more strength into his words and concluded his statement.

“I’m going to make it so that your race is able to receive that sort of treatment.”

Roroa gazed up at Ahyeon. She had one hand placed on her chest. It felt as if something was clearing up inside there.

It was an emotion that was as strange as what she had felt when she was held in Kina’s embrace.

Ahyeon grinned broadly.

“For now, let’s return to the castle once this place has been cleaned up. Your little sister as well. The other Saber-Fangs within the city should have received the summons and gathered together by then. Let’s look for jobs that’ll be worthwhile for them together, okay?”

And then, they did so.

Fin.

Footnotes

1. [\[↑\]](#) They mentioned before that their horses here have wings.



Hello, this is Ryu Saerin. It's an honor to be able to meet you all like this once more.

I believe that it's quite difficult to write afterwords. There are several rules that I had set upon myself when writing afterwords. I plan to divulge into one of those rules.

There are three stockings here.

First is Zia's stocking. But since we don't need this, let's throw this off to the side.

Next is Sii's stocking. It's a white stocking. However, not only is it frayed here and there, but there are also spots on the stocking that have become dark due to dust.

Finally, Ariya's stocking. It's a black stocking. Its denier value is incredibly high. As much as she had claimed to be a martial artist and would spar with Alshi nearly every day, it's frayed here and there just as one would expect.

I want it.

However, there is suddenly a surprise rival here. It's Zia's stocking! Rather, as expected, this isn't needed. Throw it away somewhere. It's the Silver Lion Earl's sock. The Silver Lion Earl's kneesock is an item that she has used for over 6 years now. Since the Earl doesn't enjoy bathing that much ah, I'm sorry. That was a lie. In any case, if she relies on the effect of her Lion Earl Coat(Refer to Volume 1), then whenever she's lazy, she can avoid taking it off for several months. Although its cleaning is done by magic, it's bound to become worn out if she continues to wear it around like that.

I want it.

Of course, this isn't everything. Zia's stocking! Like I said, it's not needed, so let's throw it aside. In the future of Your and My Asylum, a girl who, even in the middle of the summer, is fully geared in armor

and wears stockings, a large breasted lady wearing a body stocking, and a stocking-wearing shota will appear. I've seen several different characters wearing body stockings lately, but as I thought, it's erotic, right? Fiber that completely envelops one's body and is unable to hide the wearer's body line, but rather, reveals it more, and the abundance of sweat soaked into it. It's beautiful, right?

Tell me it's beautiful.

Truthfully, Roroa wears stockings as well. It stretches even when she transforms. This sort of magic lining treatment isn't that uncommon. This is one of the reasons why stockings are widespread throughout this world.

I don't dislike Zia. If anything, I like her. Whenever I'm writing a scene where Zia appears, my typing speed receives an enormous boost.

But something about Zia mm..... I wonder why..... if you think about it, she even has a fair amount of service scenes. I wonder why there's no desire. Something about Zia's stocking..... that's right......

As I thought, no matter how much I think about it, it's not needed......

To everyone who has picked up this book that was written by this pervert. I don't think I can hope for anything more than if this book were to your liking.

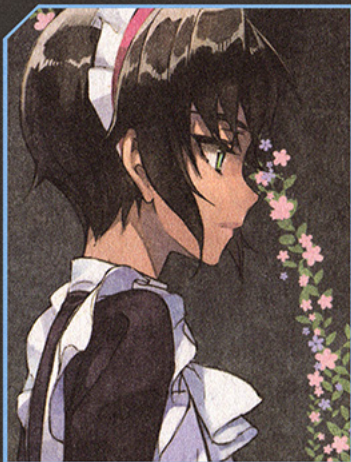
Then, please treat me well in the next volume as well.

Have a nice day.



CHARACTER PROFILE

Ariya Orgit



Race: Otherworlder

Gender: Female

Age: 17

Stamina: High

Technique: Above Average

Intelligence: Average

Wisdom: Below Average

Charm: Average

Abnormalness: Below Average

Titles

[Uncommon] Eldest Daughter of the House of Orgit, the House of Knights *(Sealed)*

[Uncommon] Clumsy *(The possessor of the title is currently denying this)*

Inventory

[Common] House of the Lion Earl's Maid Uniform

Skills

[Uncommon] Hand-to-hand Combat *(Master level)*

Alshi Brunheart



Race: Otherworlder

Gender: Female

Age: 17

Stamina: Above Average

Technique: High

Intelligence: Above Average

Wisdom: Average

Charm: Above Average

Abnormalness: Average

Titles

[Uncommon] Big-breasted Loli *(The possessor of the title is currently denying this)*

Inventory

[Uncommon] House of the Lion Earl's Maid Uniform

Skills

[Uncommon] Hand-to-hand Combat *(Master level)*

[Uncommon] Caretaker *(Thinks "This person can't survive without me" whenever she sees Ariya)*

[Common] Laundry Folding *(New!)*

Roroa Ara Harte



Race: Otherworlder/Saber-fang

Gender: Female

Age: 31

Stamina: Average

Technique: Above Average

Intelligence: High

Wisdom: Above Average

Charm: Above Average

Abnormalness: Above Average

Titles

[Rare] Dog Knight of Justice

[Uncommon] Assistant Commissioner of the Guards *(Will soon become the Vice-captain)*

[Common] Believer of the God of Equality *(Common among Saber-Fangs)*

Inventory

[Uncommon] House of the Lion Earl's Guard Uniform *(Specially made)*

[Common] Guard of the House of the Lion Earl's Sword

Skills

[Uncommon] **Unsheathed State** *(3-5/Day, Transform into a muscular monster that's about 2 meters large. Massive boost to stamina and technique, massive decrease in charm)*

[Uncommon] Autonomic Storage-type Database *(Common among Saber-Fangs)*

[Common] The Senses of a Saber-Fang *(Incredible increase to one's ability to smell)*

[Common] Sociopath

Borg Edentras



Race: Otherworlder

Gender: Male

Age: 33

Stamina: Above Average

Technique: Very High

Intelligence: Average

Wisdom: Average

Charm: Above Average

Abnormalness: Above Average

Titles

[Rare] Black Dragon Street Branch Manager of Water Dragon City

[Rare] Lunar Scorpion

Inventory

[Rare] Black Dragon Street Executive's Leather Armor Set *(Various stat boosts)*

[Rare] Other Dimension Pocket *(Storage limit of 100kg)*

[Rare] Poison of the Eight Lunar Kings *(8 types of self-made poison. The fact that he personally given it this name due to his excitement for having received the title of Lunar Scorpion at the age of 14, is a dark past he's trying to forget)*

Skills

[Rare] Poison Techniques *(Master level)*

[Uncommon] Installation and Dismantlement of Traps and Locks *(Master Level)*

[Uncommon] Battle Techniques *(Dagger combat, archery, assassination / Master Level)*

[Uncommon] Several types of spells *(Expert level)*

[Common] Choriamb *(Stats decrease when facing the strong, stats increase when facing the weak)*

[Common] Misfortune *(Especially relationships)*

Sophna Radgrinkle



Race: Ascended Being

Gender: Self-controlled

Age: 187

Stamina: Above Average

Technique: Above Average

Intelligence: Above Average

Wisdom: Above Average

Charm: Average

Abnormalness: Above Average

Titles

[Unique] The House of the Lion Earl's Head Vassal / Head of the Guards / Exclusive Mage / Exclusive Tutor / Head of the Silver Lion Royal Guards

[Rare] Ascended Being

[Rare] Yellow-Green Grass

[Uncommon] Regular Member of the Mage Tower

Inventory

[Unique] Staff of the World Tree *(The jewel is an imitation)*

[Rare] Dress of Heavenly Grass *(Increases resistance/defense)*

[Rare] Boots of Heavenly Grass *(Water walking)*

[Uncommon] Membership Card of the Mage Tower *(The Silver Lion Earl constantly nags for it to be thrown away every time she gets the chance to)*

Skills

[Unique] Dematerialization *(Plants/Trees)*

[Rare] Complete Overhaul
(2/Year, once incapable of battling any further, the user's body will condense and automatically revive itself)

[Rare] Various Spells *(Master level)*



Translation by [Shalvation Translations](#).

eBook by [Olivki](#).

Scans by Seraphin.

*Shalv forces me to work under horrible conditions, please send
help.*